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*QUEEN'S FOLLY*

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CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BETTER PART OF COURAGE.

AN hour later Lady Ellingham went slowly up the stairs. The sunbeams entering by a window on the landing shone athwart the sloping line of ancestors, full-length and in heavy gilt frames, that gave to the wide stairway its stately, sombre air. She passed upward beneath one after another—the beauty leaning on an urn who had waited on Queen Caroline and shared her painful secrets, the Dunstan with the secretive face who had been minister and all but sovereign at Naples, the soldier in the flowing Steinkerke who waved a futile sword against a background of smoke. There had been days, many days, when they had seemed to frown on her.

But to-day they smiled. At the window on the landing she stood and looked out, savouring with moist eyes the possession and the consciousness of happiness; and all the tall waving forest without, all the world of trees that had for months long closed their buds against winter's nip, waved a welcome, greeting with bursting leaves the sunshine and the birds' carols that found an echo in her full heart.

But her errand lay higher, and tearing herself away she passed up by barer stairs and narrower ways—decked, these, with Italian prints, faded and damp-stained, in maple frames; the Forum at Rome, the Mole of Hadrian, a Lucretia with the dagger in her bosom. She passed through the swing-door that squeaked, she reached the governess's room. She would fain have all happy this blissful day. She knocked.

'Miss South?'

'Oh!' in a startled tone. A bed creaked, but no movement towards the door declared itself.

My lady drew her conclusions. 'I've come to tell you that there is better news, Miss South,' she announced. 'There was a

letter in the bag—Lord Ellingham found it later—from Captain Otway who brought over the despatches. Captain Dunstan has lost his arm, but he is doing well and is believed to be out of danger.'

An exclamation, an inarticulate word !

'He will be with us in a week or ten days. Don't trouble, my dear'—for now there was a reluctant movement within,—'to come out. We thought that you would like to know.'

Without waiting for more Lady Ellingham turned and went through the swing-door and down the stairs. 'There,' she thought, but not without a pang, for she was a woman, 'George cannot say that I have not played him fair. I see it is to be, but it is a pity after all.'

Lord Ellingham was waiting for her in the hall, and her cheeks bloomed and her eyes fell as she turned the carved newel-post and saw him. 'Well?' he asked eagerly. 'What did she say, Kitty?'

'Nothing,' my lady replied with a smile.

'Come then, how did she look?'

'I didn't see her.'

He was disappointed. 'Well, I thought that you would have found out something.'

She looked at him, laying a shy hand on his arm—for the sake of touching him. 'I found out all, sir.'

'Then she——'

My lady nodded. 'Yes, it is as I thought,' she said soberly.

'But how could you tell, my dear?'

Her eyes laughed. 'Did I tell you?' she murmured.

He looked at her. 'Lord, what a fool I have been!' he said. And to hide something else, 'Let us go out, my dear. It is a glorious morning.'

But the spring brings showers as well as sunshine. And though the brightness of my lady's eyes was no longer dimmed by a cloud, and she had often to lower them that she might not betray herself to the very servants who waited on her, the outer world was grey and the trees dripped on a morning three days later when Rachel knocked at the door of the Countess's room. Bidden to come in, the girl entered. Her face was grave and her lips were set in an unnatural line.

My lady put aside her work. 'Well, my dear?' she said. 'What is it? Has Ann been misbehaving again?'

'No. She is wonderfully good—for her. I have come'—Rachel was clearly and manifestly nervous—'to ask: Would

you—I am sorry, very sorry to inconvenience you, but would you—please to release me?’

The Countess stared. ‘Release you, my dear!’ she exclaimed. ‘Why? Do you mean that you want to go? To leave us?’

‘If you please.’

‘Do you mean now—at once?’

‘If you please.’

‘But why? Why?’ Lady Ellingham turned herself so as to face the governess more squarely. ‘What in the world do you mean? What has happened? Is your mother ill?’

‘No. But—but I wish to go.’

‘I never heard of such a thing!’ my lady cried. ‘What has happened? If it is not Ann—has anyone been rude to you? If so, I will very soon——’ She broke off as another idea occurred to her and brought the colour to her face. ‘Or is it—surely, surely you are not so foolish! You don’t mean, child, that you are going back to what I said a fortnight ago, when—when something had put me out. I was not well, and—my dear, if you are bringing that up again, if you are so silly after all that has happened, I shall have—indeed I shall have a poor opinion of you.’

‘It is not that!’

‘But——’

‘Indeed, indeed it is not that!’ For a moment the girl’s distress broke through her resolved air. ‘But—I am not happy here and—and I wish to go.’ She twisted and untwisted her fingers.

‘Silly girl, you would be no happier elsewhere. I am sure of that, and I shall not let you go. Where shall I find anyone to manage Ann as well as you do? There, my dear,’ my lady put the matter aside and turned to her work, ‘run away and put this foolish idea out of your head.’

But Rachel held her ground. ‘I must go,’ she said in a low voice. ‘I have written to my mother that—that I am coming.’

‘Then you had no right to do so. And you must write again and tell her that you are not coming. Come, run away. That is settled.’

But Rachel persisted. ‘I must go!’ she said. ‘I want to go!’

‘Without notice?’

Rachel’s lips trembled. ‘I am sure that you are too kind to keep me against my will,’ she faltered. ‘I want to go! I want to go!’ she repeated, clasping her hands. ‘I am not happy here.’

My lady considered her in silence. ‘Miss South,’ she said at last in an altered tone, ‘I hope—I hope that it is not as I begin

to suspect. I do trust that it is not Mr. Girardot that you are unhappy about? If I thought that it was that I should write to your mother——'

'Oh, don't do that!' Rachel exclaimed, her cheeks flaming. 'It is an insult to suppose that I—that I'— she stopped, and in a moment her whole aspect changed, and lowering her eyes she traced a pattern on the carpet with her toe—'that I am thinking of him! But perhaps—it has something to do with that. I met him here, and as long as I am here I am unhappy. I am very unhappy,' she repeated in a piteous voice, 'and, if you please, I must go.'

'Oh, dear, dear!' my lady said, and her face was grave. 'Yet you know—you must know that he is not worthy of you! That he is not worthy of a single thought. He deceived you, and——'

'But we cannot always—we are not always able——' Rachel's faltering voice trickled into silence, leaving the sentence unfinished.

'I am very, very sorry,' the Countess said, and her face bore out her words. 'This is sad. Don't you think that time, my dear——'

'Not here,' Rachel murmured.

'Oh, dear, dear!' my lady repeated. She looked really upset. 'And you want to go at once?'

'To-morrow—if I may. Oh, Lady Ellingham—please let me go to-morrow.'

The Countess sighed. 'Very well,' she said at last. 'It shall be as you wish. But you will remember, my dear, that wherever you are, we are your friends. That you can never be as others to us. You know that we owe our boy's life to you, and perhaps in a few months—— But I shall write to your mother.'

That alarmed Rachel. 'But you won't tell her——'

'Why you are leaving us? No, for I trust to your good sense. I am sure that you will have the strength to conquer this fancy. Otherwise it would be my duty to write. As it is, your mother will think it strange that we should part with you so lightly. She will think us very ungrateful, my dear. You must promise me that you will put this unhappy feeling out of your mind.'

Rachel said meekly that she would try. She meant it.

'For that way lies nothing but misery. Nothing can come of it. You see that for yourself?'

'I do, I do!' Rachel answered miserably. 'That is why I want to go.'



'Oh, dear, dear!' my lady repeated. 'Well, I'll give the orders, but I don't know what Ann will say.'

And for some minutes after Rachel had crept away my lady sat in deep thought. In the end she seemed to see compensation. 'Perhaps it is for the best,' she reflected. 'He may have thought better of it, and, look at it how you will, it is a *mésalliance*. Yes, it is for the best no doubt. But I hope that he will not blame me.'

It was Bowles who was this time the first to hear the news, and Bowles, who laden with it broke in on Mrs. Jemmett's after-dinner nap: 'Well,' he announced, 'if I don't astonish you this time, Mrs. J., I'm d—d.'

'You do astonish me!' the housekeeper retorted, as she sat up and straightened her cap. 'If I have told you once, my man, I have told you a dozen times—no language in this room!'

'Excuse! But, by gum, ma'am, that girl's going!'

Mrs. Jemmett stared. 'Not the governess?'

'You've said it, ma'am.'

'Umph! Well, I'll believe it when I see it. Don't stare, man, like a duck in thunder. They couldn't let her. Why, I told you myself no longer ago than yesterday that I saw my lady put her hand on her shoulder in the hall as if—why, just as if—'

'Well, she's going,' Bowles persisted. 'I met Priscilla on the front stairs, and "You've no business here," says I, pretty sharp. "I want some string," says she, "and I saw a piece——" "You'll see the outside of the door with a flea in your ear!" I answered. "String? What do you want with string? It's not the governess going this time!" "It's just that, Mr. Bowles," says she, whimpering, "and her bag——" "Now none of your lies," I said, and I gave the girl a good shake. "You are up to some game of your own, you young baggage!" "Indeed I'm not, sir," says she. "It's gospel truth. She's going, and her bag——" "D—n her bag!" I said, but I saw that the wench believed it, and I came away. I knew that you'd like to hear.'

Mrs. Jemmett ruminated. 'It's odd,' she said, 'if so be it's true. Why should she go? It's not her ladyship this time, that's certain.'

'Her ladyship? Why you might light candles at her eyes these days! She wouldn't hurt a fly. A blind man might see how things are with her! Didn't she order the Queen's quilt that my lord sets such store by to be got out of the satinwood chest and put——'

'Bowles!' Mrs. Jemmett exclaimed. 'You trench, man, you trench! If you don't know by this time that ther are things that in well-conducted houses are not noticed——'

'But one can't help one's thoughts, ma'am,' Bowles pleaded. 'Don't say now as it don't set you thinking, Mrs. J. ?'

'I hope I am not that kind of person,' Mrs. Jemmett replied stiffly.

Bowles dropped the subject. 'Well, anyway it's not my lord,' he said. 'Honey won't melt in his mouth. But I am not so certain about the young ladyship. She's a little devil in her tantrums, and she and miss had a turn-up yesterday.'

'And she went half an hour later,' Mrs. Jemmett rejoined from a height of superior knowledge, 'and asked miss to box her ears. Priscilla was there and told me.'

'Then I'm fair flummoxed.'

'It don't take much to flummox you, Bowles. If you ask me I think the girl has been setting her cap at my lord, and now she sees it's no good, she's off.'

The butler stared. 'Well, set a woman to catch a woman,' he said. 'I'd not have thought of that in a month of Sundays. But you've a powerful mind, Mrs. Jemmett, and if you'd only a softer heart and sometimes thought of yours truly——'

'I think very little of him,' the housekeeper retorted with a heightened colour.

'For, as for quilts, ma'am, and well you know it, it's not the quilt as matters, it's the——'

'Bowles !' Mrs. Jemmett rose in her outraged modesty. 'I'm surprised at you !'

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### HOME.

SHE was going home to her mother, to Ruth, to the cottage by the sea. Every turn of the wheels brought her nearer, and already she could picture the rapturous welcome, the loving embrace that awaited her at her journey's end. Yet the hoof-beat of the horses as the carriage rolled along the road beside the Ringwood water-meadows, where the kingcups already laid golden patches on the green and the new-risen sun drank up the mists above Somerley, failed to elate her. Home ? The word did indeed carry her mind back to her departure thence and to the incidents of that first journey ; but it was with something like envy that she recalled the fears of that day, the shyness that had enfolded her, her misgivings lest she should miss the coach, her apprehensions of the reception

that awaited her. She could smile at them now. They had been but the tremors of youth and inexperience. For, had she but known it, she had been happy then, heart-free, care-free, untouched by the real troubles of life. Now——

She sank lower in her corner, a small, lonely figure staring out with sad eyes as the chaise rattled over the bridge at Fording-bridge and, swerving to the right, passed before the Greyhound. For there she recalled another scene, a night scene; and once more she slid, sore and aching, from the saddle, once more crept, too weary to resist, into the shelter of the wondering, awakened inn. How kind he had been to her, how thoughtful, how considerate—though he too must have been racked with weariness! With what care, veiled under rough manners, had he lapped the poor dependant about, fenced her from curiosity, attended to her wants! And, last kindness of all, with what firmness had he enforced her return, and at the Folly had shielded and protected her! Fondly, foolishly she recalled it all; trifles that she had not seemed to see, words that she had not seemed to hear, touches that set her blood tingling. She shed a few tears in the corner of the chaise, and, 'It was time that I came away!' she thought. 'A few kind words and I—oh, I am a fool! I am a fool! What would my mother say!'

And at Salisbury, where she had to wait an hour, strolling up and down between the White Hart and the water channel that ran along the base of the Close Wall, it was the same. She might have visited the Cathedral—it was but a step. But she preferred to pass her time within sight of the yard, and again she saw—but with other eyes—the tall figure in the shabby sea-cloak that talked with the landlord, again she saw the Captain stalk masterfully into the room where she cowered in her corner, saw him tug at the bell, heard him call for 'that cat-lap,' owned the good-nature that made her share it and forced him, in sheer pity, to put up with her company. Nor did her thoughts stop there—for what to the woman who loves is dearer than the man's foible, the weakness that makes her mother as well as mistress to him? Again she heard him hum his eternal—

'Oh, Hood and Howe and Jervis  
Are masters of the main,  
Cornwallis sweeps the narrow seas  
And logs the weather-vane.  
And Duncan in his Seventy Four,  
His Venerable Seventy Four.'

Her eyes filled. How little had she understood the man, his nobleness, his generosity ! How little foreseen the future, or her own weakness ! ' But indeed I will conquer it,' she vowed, furtively drying her eyes. And through the long coach-hours, while passengers entered and left unheeded, and Shaftesbury and Crewkerne flitted by unnoticed, she repeated her vow—yet now and again thought, perforce, of his lost arm and his maimed manhood and shed a few more tears. But that was in the darkness when they were not far short of Exeter—and they were to be the last, the very last. Henceforth she would be sensible !

And beyond Exeter, whence she drove through the night in a fly, giving her orders with an aplomb that a year ago would have astonished her, she flattered herself that she had succeeded. The nearness of her home, the sight of familiar things looming up and passing by, and presently the sound and tang of the sea, and the shimmer of the moon on its waters, shifted the direction of her thoughts. How often in the past months had she pictured her return, how often longed with passion to see the lighted porch and hear the home voices ! And now—now they were at hand, ay, they broke upon her. Now, in a moment, all that she had pictured was hers ; and if the two loved figures silhouetted against the cheerful doorway, if the clinging mother-arms, the loving greeting, the homely room and the tea-board twinkling in her honour—if these had not drawn from her tears of another nature, she had not been Rachel, she had not been the affectionate creature that she was !

For the time, the Folly, its life and its inmates, receded into a dim background, and with a dear hand clasped in each of hers, she rested on the bosom of the love that had been hers from childhood. She looked round with a full heart ; she saw the old things, the old greying tabby curled up on a chair, the china dogs on the shelf, the hissing kettle, and asked herself what, what more could she wish for or desire.

And still and withal there were little pin-pricks to be borne, questions to answer that were awkward to answer. Why had she left ? And so suddenly ? And on what ground ? And what had the Countess said ? And had she been horrid ? With some of these it was easy to deal. It was easy to assure Ruth that there had been no balls and that she had not once danced, that she had sometimes come down in the evening, and that of late she had breakfasted with the family ; that my lord did not wear a

star, and that my lady only drove with four horses and an outrider when she paid visits. But it was not so easy to answer her mother's questions as to her leaving; and though Mrs. South in these first moments of rejoicing did not push her inquiries, the mother's instinct discerned that there was something still to be explained. And presently she fancied that she had the clue to the secret.

For before Rachel had sat many minutes at her tea—and oh, the delicious meal taken in freedom with none but friendly eyes and hands about her!—the girl had herself a shock. 'La, Rachel,' Ruth cried, 'and we'd forgotten! What do you think? But you know, I suppose? We had a visit from a beau of yours last week!'

'A beau of mine?' Rachel faltered, her hand arrested. 'What do you mean, my dear?'

'And such a beau!' Ruth's eyes were dancing. 'The handsomest man! And he talked beautifully. I fell in love with him myself.'

'But who was it?'

Ruth laughed. 'What will you give to know? Who, indeed? As if you don't know, cunning!'

'Indeed, indeed,' Rachel said, avoiding her mother's eyes, 'I don't. I cannot imagine who would come here.'

'Not Mr. Girardot?'

Rachel's face flamed. 'Mr. Girardot!' she exclaimed.

'And oh, the dandy—I never! He hoped to find you here and wished to know when we expected you, and inquired——'

'I hope you did not say that I was coming.'

'We did not know,' her mother replied sedately. Rachel's confusion had not escaped her. 'He was only in the neighbourhood for a night, he said, and we could tell him nothing.'

'I am glad of that,' Rachel said. She had recovered her composure. 'I do not like him, and I do not wish to see him.'

'Oh, but Rachel!' Ruth protested, quite cast down. 'He is so good-looking! And he asked so anxiously after you.'

'He is good-looking, but——'

'Perhaps his good looks are his best point,' her mother said soberly.

'Yes, mother, that is so. I hope that he will not come again.' And Rachel hastened to change the subject.

But naturally Mrs. South drew her conclusions. Pending Rachel's arrival she had been inclined to connect the girl's return with the stranger's visit; and she had given some rein to a mother's

hopes and fears, for she knew from Rachel's letters who Girardot was and the position he had filled at the Lodge. But she knew little more, for Rachel had shrunk from telling the story. Now Mrs. South still connected the two events, but after a different fashion, and she was troubled; and when the lights had been put out, and the three were climbing the stairs, that seemed to Rachel's eyes steeper and narrower than of old, she got a word alone with her girl. 'There is nothing between you and this gentleman, my dear?' she said. 'You will tell me, I am sure, if there is.'

'Nothing, dear mother, nothing!' But the girl's colour rose. 'How could there be? He is married.'

'Oh!' Mrs. South averted her eyes. She was startled. 'I did not know that, of course.' And she hastened to get away from a subject so dangerous. 'You left Lady Ellingham on good terms, I trust?' she asked anxiously. 'There was no trouble?'

'None. She was most kind. She told me that she would give me the best of recommendations, and with that I shall have no difficulty in getting another situation. You see,' Rachel continued, with an affectionate hug, 'I am experienced now, mother. But with people not so grand, I hope. I was not'—with a quivering mouth—'very happy there.'

'No, my dear, I understand that. And you were wise to come away. But now you are here we must keep you a little while. Ah, Rachel, how I have missed you!' And the two women laughed and cried in one another's arms.

But to the fledgling that has once flown from the nest, the nest is never the same again. And so Rachel, hiding a sore heart, discovered in the weeks that followed. Put the best face on it that she could, she was restless and unhappy. The hours that had once been too short for the daily tasks now seemed tedious and vacant. The old occupations no longer satisfied. The very affection that wrapped her about, filled her with self-reproach because it now failed to satisfy her. She longed to be alone, and often she stole away to pass hours by the sea, finding in its wide greyness and the sad, monotonous fall of the waves on the beach a something that suited her mood. She wandered away, only to return ashamed of the selfish feelings in which she had lapped herself. She told herself bravely that time would work a cure, and that by and by she would be again as she had been. But time is a medicine slow to operate, and meanwhile the girl suffered, unable to pluck from her heart the image that haunted it, or to put from her the memories

that set her pulses leaping, the dreams that brought the blood to her cheeks.

No, though with shame she owned that she had only herself to blame: that she had given her heart to one who had not sought it nor asked for it, and who was so far above her, so widely removed from her, that could he be made aware of the gift, he must smile at her folly. And she had given it in return for what? For a few kind words, a service that, the man being what he was, he would have performed for a beggar-woman! And because he, Heaven save the mark, had lost an arm! For that, she told herself with cruel frankness, had put the finishing touch to her surrender!

It was weakness incredible, and with all her strength she strove to be cheerful, strove to be the daughter that she had been! She hid her feelings, and tried to make the best of things; and often her face would burn with shame as she sat with those who deemed her good, who held her sensible, nor in their innocence had it in them to conceive of her as she really was—possessed by this unmaidenly yearning, this feverish longing that racked her heart.

But strive as she might, Mrs. South was not deceived. She saw with clear eyes that all was not well with the girl, and she fancied that in the handsome tutor she held the key to the trouble. For a while she too comforted herself with the reflection that time would work a cure. But when a month had gone by and Rachel, in spite of all her efforts—and the mother saw that the girl made gallant efforts—still pined and moped, Mrs. South determined that a change must be made. She longed to keep the stricken lamb, never dearer to her than now; but a higher love gave her strength, and one morning, when Rachel had stolen away along the shore, she put on her bonnet and followed her.

'I will walk a little way with you, my dear,' she said. 'I want a breath of air. I have had the grocer's bill and it is larger than I expected. You haven't'—oh, the cunning mother!—'five pounds left of your salary, have you?'

Rachel fell into the trap. 'Of course I have!' she cried. 'And more! I will go back and get it, mother. How glad I am that I can help you!'

'Well, it is a help,' Mrs. South admitted, and turned with her. 'But there is no hurry. We need not go so fast, my dear.'

But Rachel's thoughts were travelling even more swiftly than her feet and in the direction that her mother desired. 'Oh



dear!' she cried remorsefully. 'And I have been living on you! I ought to have looked out for something before this! I will write an advertisement to-day. You know,' she added cheerfully, 'I am an experienced young woman now, recommended by the nobility and gentry.'

'I am sorry to lose you; you know that, my dear. But——'

'But there is that "but," isn't there, mother dear? And I don't mind a bit going out now! The first time it was rather terrible.'

'Yes, Rachel, I know.' And the mother's heart ached for her child. But she made no sign. It was better that the girl should go from her, and in a new scene, where she would be forced to exert herself, should win back her peace.

They were within a hundred yards of the cottage, and Rachel was planning her advertisement, when the little maid appeared coming to meet them. 'What is it now!' Mrs. South exclaimed. 'I am afraid that Deb has burned the potatoes again.'

But it was not that. It was a visitor—a stranger. He had asked for the young mistress.

'Oh dear!' Rachel exclaimed, her eyes betraying her alarm.

'Is it the gentleman who called a month or so ago?' Mrs. South asked anxiously.

But Deb could not say. She had been out when the other gentleman had called.

'Very well,' Mrs. South said. 'We will follow you.' But when the maid had tripped away, 'I am afraid that it is,' she said, her face grave. 'Do you wish to see him, Rachel?'

'No, certainly not.'

'You don't——'

'No, no!' with anger. 'I won't see him!'

'Very well, my dear. Then you had better turn back. I will see him.'

'And you will send him away, mother?'

'Certainly. I shall tell him that you do not wish to see him.'

'Please, please do. I won't see him!'

'That is enough, my dear,' Mrs. South said, and leaving her daughter went on alone. But as the mother approached the cottage her thoughts were busy and her face was sad. Rachel was acting as she would have her act, but Mrs. South had no doubt now that her conjectures were justified. This was a bad man and the cause of her daughter's unhappiness. He was a married man,

and no doubt he had trifled with her—with a sigh Mrs. South recalled his good looks and his plausible address. Well, she must be plain with him, round with him, while she must not betray her daughter. As she walked she planned what she would say and how she would dismiss him. The task was no light one, no pleasant one. And it had fallen to her when she least expected it.

Meanwhile Rachel, hot with indignation, turned back, and as quickly as she could placed a sandhill between herself and the cottage. She felt herself outraged by Girardot's intrusion. It recalled things that she was bitterly anxious to forget, it brought home to her her perpetual, her hopeless weakness, it set her present folly in the worst, the most humiliating light. That the man should be so shameless, so persistent! That he should presume to follow her, to pursue her even in her mother's house! That he should dare to ignore the wrong that he had sought to do her, and the circumstances in which they had parted! Oh, he was abominable! He was utterly, utterly bad!

But—but, a small voice whispered, he was at least constant. He had not, she reflected with shame, a heart for all comers, as she, wretched, feeble, fickle girl, had! And if he suffered as she suffered? The sea-gulls wailed above her head, the scrubby grass that clothed the sandhills rustled coldly in the breeze, the sea stretched away, grey, flat, illimitable under a leaden sky; and suddenly chilled, stricken by an unhappy sense of kinship with him and of a common fate, Rachel owned the sadness of life. He suffered, and by his own fault. And she suffered, and by her own fault, for what plea, what defence had she to urge, when a woman's pride, a woman's reserve, had twice failed her—in a twelvemonth. The waves fell on the beach at her feet, coldly, sullenly, persistently, as they had fallen for ages and would fall for ages to come. They gave her melancholy answer.

She was wandering at large, no longer blaming him but herself, when a cry reached her ears, and, glancing behind her, she saw Deb waving to her from the crest of the sandhill—it was the one on which they spread their linen to dry on washing-days. She turned and went back to meet the girl, thankful that at any rate that was over. No doubt he was gone.

She found a minute later that her relief was premature. 'If you please,' the maid announced, 'the mistress says, will you come in.'

'The gentleman has gone?'

'No, miss. The mistress is with him. She came out to send me.'

Rachel's heart sank. What could it mean? What could he have told her mother? She questioned Deb, but Deb was clear. The mistress had told her to find Miss Rachel and bring her in.

'Very well,' Rachel said wearily, 'I will come.' And with lagging feet she followed Deb back to the cottage. If it had to be, it had to be. But what had he told her mother? What strange colour had he put on things that had induced her mother to allow, nay, to wish her to see him?

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE DULLARDS THAT MEN ARE!

HER mother was waiting for her in the porch, and their eyes met. 'Oh,' Rachel murmured, 'must I see him?' She clasped her hands. Every fibre in her was in revolt against the interview.

Mrs. South's face wore a flush, and she looked worried and anxious. But her reply was decisive. 'Yes, you must see him,' she said. 'That is quite certain. But—but oh, my dear,' she continued, speaking with deep feeling, yet in a low voice, for the door of the parlour was only a pace away, 'think before you speak. And don't, don't, my darling'—she laid a timid hand on her daughter's arm—'let a fancy, such as I fear you have, blind you to—I don't say your duty, Rachel, I don't dare, for I don't know all and I fear to press you. But promise me, promise me, my own, that you will not act hastily.'

Rachel wondered. Surely, surely her mother, who knew her, might trust her to do right in so clear a case. And yet that mother was trembling with anxiety. 'I have only one thing to say,' she replied coldly. 'You must know that, mother.'

'Yet, oh, my dear, think!' And as Rachel turned to enter the parlour, Mrs. South caught her again by the sleeve—she did not seem able to let her go. 'I fear to say too much, for I am in the dark. It has come as a great surprise to me. Yet it seems so—oh, I don't know how to say it, but'—she folded her in a hasty embrace—'may God guide you rightly! He seems to me a good man, and if I could believe—'

Rachel cut her short. 'He is not a good man,' she said. 'And I have only one thing to say to him. I have not fallen to that extent,' with a look of reproach. 'You may trust me,

mother !' And heedless of a last appeal that Mrs. South would have urged, she passed with a firm step into the parlour and closed the door. The ordeal would be painful, but she was determined that it should be short.

He had been pacing the narrow room, but he had heard her step outside, and when she entered he was standing, looking through the latticed window. He had put off his cloak, that very cloak which had a cherished place in her memory, and a single glance should have informed Rachel who he was. But so strong was the fixed idea that for a whirling second or two her mind rejected the impossible, and she fancied that her sight deceived her.

Then—she knew. She grasped the certainty that the last person in the world whom she had expected to see had turned, and with his back to the light was looking at her ; and in the first rapture of surprise, of seeing him, of being in the same room with him, of being about to hear his voice, the blood fled from her face. She gripped the back of a chair, and dizzy with emotion supported herself by it. ' Captain Dunstan ! ' she ejaculated.

The man's eyes devoured her, but his heart sank. For he had told himself, while he waited and his gaze roved over the humble ornaments, the household things that her touch had hallowed—he had told himself with simple craft that if she blushed when she saw him, all would be well—he would have his heart's desire. But seeing, instead of a blush, a white startled face, he told himself that all was wrong. Still he was no faint heart and he rallied. ' Yes,' he said. ' You see I have come to see you in your home. I fear I have taken you by surprise.'

' My mother did not say——' she stammered, halted. ' Of course—I did not expect you.' Then with an effort, ' Won't you sit down ? ' And in an agony of nervousness Rachel turned, apparently to draw up the chair by which she stood, but in truth to hide the burning colour that now flooded her face. She need not have troubled herself, however, for as, summoning all her self-control, she faced him, her eyes fell on the empty sleeve pinned to his breast, and again her blood ebbed and her eyes filled. ' Oh ! ' she exclaimed. ' I am sorry ! '

He understood. ' About this ? ' he said briskly, shaking the stump. ' Pooh, it's cheap at the price ! They take me for Nelson in the street. A little awkward, as it is the right arm, you know. But—for a moment his dark keen eyes dwelt on her—' I hope to replace it to-day.'

She did not follow this, but, thank Heaven, she was regaining some control of herself. They were now seated, and 'I suppose that you are staying in the neighbourhood—with Lady Elizabeth perhaps?' she murmured, in as commonplace a tone as she could manage. But why, oh, why did not her mother come in?

'No,' he replied in his downright fashion. 'I'm not staying with Lady Elizabeth. I came to see you.'

She was hopelessly at sea. What could he mean, and why did he look at her so oddly? It was impossible that he had taken that long journey to see her! She must have misunderstood him, or—yes, that must be it. He brought some message, an invitation to return, perhaps, from Lady Ellingham. And seizing in her embarrassment on the thought, 'Lady Ellingham?' she murmured. 'She is well, I hope?'

'She was yesterday.'

'And—and Lady Ann?'

'Ann? Oh, Ann is never ill. She is like me.'

'And'—she knew that she was talking absurdly, but in her confusion and her fear of silence she felt that she must go through every member of the family—'and Lord Ellingham?'

'Fred? Oh, he's all right. And the boy. But I didn't come to talk about them.'

'The forest,' she said faintly, 'must be looking lovely now.'

'I hope you will judge for yourself.' He straightened himself and stood up. After all it was not much worse than a cutting out! 'I didn't come to talk about that either.'

He glanced darkly at her, and suddenly it was borne in upon Rachel that he too was not at his ease; and the discovery steadied her. 'I came,' he continued, looking at her and looking away again, 'to rig a jury-arm, if you understand—two for one, if you understand, my dear. But it is a business I've no experience of. I know very well the port I am bound for, but I don't know how to lay the course unless you'll help me. But—you don't know what I am talking about?'

'No,' Rachel confessed. She was looking at him with troubled eyes, and her heart was thumping painfully. It was impossible, oh, it could not be! And yet his manner was so odd.

'No, of course you don't.' He began to pace this way and that, jerking the stump of the right arm. 'How the devil should you? Eh? How should you? I've flown no colours. But do you remember that night at Whitsbury, Miss South? There!—'

to himself—'I hope to God that's the last time! Well, I made up my mind that night that I'd found the wife that—that would suit me—if I could get her. But, mind you, it's no light thing to take a wife, and I am no youngster to take up with the first petticoat on the Hard; and I said to myself, "I'll haul off a bit, and see if I am in the same mind." And I've waited and I'm more of that mind than ever. And you may be sure, my dear, that I'm no Dutch ketch, veering and falling off when the wind shifts a point, and where my hand goes my heart goes with it, and stays. I can't make pretty speeches, as they make 'em in drawing-rooms, but I stick by what I say. And,' hesitating, 'if you don't feel that you can take me at once—and, d—n it all, why should you?—I'll haul off for a month and come back when you're ready.'

Rachel's heart thumped no longer. She understood at last, and faced him with steadfast eyes, marvelling at her own firmness. The trouble would come later, when every blunt word that he had said, burnt in on her heart, would smart to agony. But for the moment she was firm, almost cold. Already she had made up her mind what she must answer, what was the only thing that she could answer. Yet—yes, she must have it clear. 'I don't think that I understand,' she said.

'But, confound it, I've been plain. Too plain, perhaps? And I've spoken to your mother.'

For a moment her voice failed her. Ah, but how good, how generous he was. Then, 'Do you mean,' she said, 'that you are asking me to be your wife, Captain Dunstan?'

'I've said so, haven't I? Plump and plain. I meant to.'

'Yes. But I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe,' she continued firmly, 'that you could be so imprudent. For,' with a pale smile, 'I might have accepted you, you know. The honour you do me is so great, so very great for one in my position, and you have so much to offer that I might have been foolish enough to accept you, sir—not loving you. But I cannot be so unworthy of your good opinion. What you suggest is impossible. There is too great'—she paused, marvelling anew at her own coolness—'there is far too great a distance between us, between Captain Dunstan and his sister's governess for—for it to be possible. For any happiness to come of it. This—this is my home and I love it and am at ease in it. But you couldn't be at home in it, nor I be happy or at home at Queen's Folly—among those to whom

I do not belong. You know '—for a moment her voice trembled perilously—' there are flowers that will only grow on the north side of the wall.'

'Fudge!' he cried.

Rachel shook her head. 'No,' she said, 'it is the best of sense.'

'Then you don't care for me!' He turned away, turned abruptly and looked through the window; while Rachel sat stiffly in her chair, clutching herself lest even now pain should wring a cry from her. But it would soon be over—soon, and he would be gone.

He turned again. 'Well, I don't know why the devil you should,' he said, 'as I never signalled you. It is my fault. But see here, my girl, couldn't you? I don't say love me at once, but couldn't you like me? Couldn't you like me well enough to sign articles by and by?'

One last effort—but it was cruel, cruel to ask so much of her. 'No,' she answered slowly—and, ah, the pain it cost her, for she knew that with that word she barred the door that she had already closed on her happiness. 'I am sure, Captain Dunstan, that I can never like you better than I do now. Or feel differently towards you. I am quite sure of that.'

'Well,' he answered, 'that's flat. That's plain.' He averted his eyes and stared at the wall. 'I've a letter here from Kitty for you, but '—to himself—' no, why should I plague the girl with it? If she don't like me, that's all. Only,' turning almost savagely and looking down his long sharp nose at her, 'if it's that d—d Girardot, I'll break his neck. D'you hear? He's not fit to clean your shoes.'

'It is not,' she said dully. 'I care nothing for him.'

'Nor for me,' he answered gloomily. Then after a pause, 'Well, there it is.' He held out his hand. 'I'm obliged to you for your honesty. Yes, damme, I am. You are what I thought you and what I knew you were, and I can't say more. Oh, d—n it, good-bye, and God bless you, and—don't let me make a fool of myself!'

She put a cold hand into his, and he wrung it so hard that at another time she must have cried out. Then he turned to the door. She watched him struggle left-handed with the latch—he did not seem to see well—watched him open the door at last and go out. She watched him dumbly, though it needed all her strength to hold back the cry of anguish that rose to her lips, the cry that would even now, she knew, bring him back to her side.

But when the door was shut upon him her strength failed. She



could bear no more. As she heard his retreating footsteps she flung herself face downwards on the chair on which she had sat, and dry sobs shook her form, tore her bosom, stifled her. Oh, it was too much! Too much had been asked of her. And perhaps, perhaps she was wrong! Perhaps she had flung away her happiness for a scruple, a nothing!

He had found no one in the passage—the mother had fled upstairs to pray—and with a stern face he had struggled into his cloak and stalked away. He made with rapid strides for the little hamlet where he had left his post-chaise, and from which he had walked with joyous anticipation, with so hopeful a heart. Well, it was over. All over!

But when he had placed fifty yards between himself and the cottage his hand, thrust into the pocket of his cloak, encountered his sister-in-law's letter, and he stood. 'Umph!' he muttered, frowning at the grey waste of sea that plashed sadly at his feet. 'She may as well see what they think of her. It is but fair.' He talked about with his usual abruptness, and as rapidly as he had come he retraced his steps. He strode through the porch, saw no one, and careless, as ever, of ceremony and intent only on his purpose he opened the parlour door.

She did not hear him, much less see him. But he saw her. He looked down at the grief-racked little form, he heard the long slow sobs that shook it, he gazed spell-bound at the slender white nape and the mass of fair curls cast in abandonment on the outstretched arms that grasped the chair! And, dull as he had been, he was no longer deceived. He read the meaning of it, and no change from cloud to sunshine sweeping over the heather-clad slope of a hill in spring was more wonderful than the change that transformed his plain face. At last, 'You little liar!' he said. 'You little liar!'

The words were a thunder-clap. She looked up incredulous, confounded. Her eyes met his, and was it her fault if her piteous face betrayed the truth? If it told him what he knew already, if surprised and convicted she had not a word to say, but, snatched up, had no longer the will to struggle or the breath to speak or lips to deny. If all the foolish wall of pretence that she had built up with anguish fell at a touch and left her on his breast.

'But I never, never lied to you,' she protested a little later. 'I only said that I could never love you better than I did. And it was true, sir.'

'Like, you said, like, you little trickster!'

'Well, perhaps it was only liking,' she replied demurely, but she did not deceive him twice. 'Only, oh dear,' and a cloud came over her happy, blushing face, 'what will they say of it at the Folly? They will think you mad, and me—I do not know,' she cried, shrinking, 'what they will think of me.'

'Who?'

'All of them, sir. Lady Ellingham and Lord Ellingham and—and all.'

'Hang them all! And Kitty and Fred? You shall see what they say.' And he took out the letter which, foolish, clumsy man, he should have shown her at the first.

As she read it her eyes filled with tears. 'Oh, they are kind!' she cried. 'They are kind!' She kissed the letter. 'And yet I shall be afraid to see them!'

'Little silly!' he said. 'Do you not know me yet? Do you think I am not master on my own quarter-deck?'

She looked at him daringly. 'Then what am I?' she asked.

His eyes twinkled. He told her.

He stayed until late in the evening and sailor-like made himself at home. Rachel thought his manner to her mother delightful and loved him anew for it. And Mrs. South endeavoured to meet him in the same spirit. But the poor woman was weighed down by misgivings. She had been dazzled for an hour by the prospect opened before her daughter; she had hoped and even prayed that the girl might accept this grand, this incredible offer—the impulse was natural. But the man, now that she considered him at close quarters, was strange to her and formidable. He loomed large in the little room; he was plain and blunt, authority spoke loud in him, and doubtless her knowledge of his position doubled her sense of this. And awed by him, and deceived by Rachel's manner—for the girl was too happy and perhaps too shy to talk much—the mother trembled and repented.

And Ruth, had she been canvassed, would have agreed with her mother. From her corner she watched the two with the fascinated eyes of a girl emerging from childhood, and engrossed in what she saw, she marvelled. She thought the Captain grim and very awful, but far from a hero of romance. She wondered at her sister's courage in taking him, and above all she was curious. She coloured when Rachel laid a hand on his shoulder as she passed behind him. She thrilled when she saw the same daring

spirit take his egg from his grasp and cut off the top. She looked away when she detected him stretching out a hand to caress her sister's skirt. Above all she burned with a devouring curiosity—had he kissed her? It seemed a thing inconceivable, incredible, impossible—that stranger! And when he did actually kiss her on taking leave, coolly, audaciously, and before their eyes, and Rachel, though she blushed deeply, made no demur, Ruth gasped. She felt that she had no more to learn. She was a woman, equipped for the world, experienced, without illusions.

The mother crushed down her fears until on their way up to bed she got her darling to herself. Then searching the girl's face with wistful eyes, as she held her tenderly to her, she put her misgivings into words. 'For oh, my dear, I am frightened,' she said. 'I was wrong to press you. If you don't feel sure, if you are not certain, draw back now, draw back, my dear, before it is too late. If you fear him, I will explain, I will see him myself—'

'Fear him?' Rachel raised her brimming eyes to her mother's face, and what the mother read in them dispelled once and for all her doubts. 'Oh, mother, I love him, I love him dearly! He is the best, the kindest, the noblest of men! He is mine, my man! If I lost him now I think I should die!'

He took her back to the Folly a week later, and on the way they had tea at the White Hart at Salisbury, and Rachel sat again in the chair in the dark corner to which she had once fled to avoid him; she looked again through the red-curtained window that opened on the yard. And if he had not pulled the bell-rope with violence and called the tea 'cat-lap,' and boomed at John, and if the landlord had not come in respectfully to condole with him on the loss of his arm, the thing would not have been perfect. And after tea, while the fresh team was being harnessed, they strolled in the quiet spacious Close, and she hung on his arm, and teased him. And in the chaise he hummed a new ditty:

'Oh, First of Seamen, mist or shine  
Thou shalt for ever break the line,  
And England keep,  
Dear England keep.  
Thy Elephant shall trumpet high,  
Thy Agamemnon proud reply,  
And laurels reap,  
Thy laurels reap.

Thy Vanguard and thy Captain too  
 Shall flaunt thy ghostly pennant blue,  
     And sacred keep,  
 Thy name shall keep

When all the hearts of Oak that swim  
 Shall tideless rest, their memory dim  
     In Ocean's deep,  
     In Ocean's sleep.'

And her heart swelled, and she loved him for it. His voice, once so harsh, was sweet in her ears, and that which had been doggerel was by the magic of love's alembic turned to poetry. But as they climbed the ascent beyond Ringwood, and the prospect of the Folly began to rise before her, she put her hand into his and she fell silent.

'Ay,' said Bowles an hour later, 'and I tell you, ma'am, it was as pretty a sight as you'd wish to see. The Captain, he stayed by the chaise seeing Charles and his man and the others take out the portmantles, and she come up the steps alone and frightened-like, hanging her head—she never was one for making the most of herself, as you know, Mrs. J., nor the figure to do it as some I could name. And first that little devil of a Lady Ann fell upon her and nearly knocked her down. Then half-way up his lordship meets her, and what he said I couldn't hear. But she answered flurried-like, "I hope Lady Ellingham is well." And he laughed—there's no one can laugh more jolly than his lordship, I will say that—and says he, "Your sister is waiting for you in the hall," says he. And her ladyship met her at the top of the steps and took her and kissed her.'

'There's not much in kisses,' said Mrs. Jemmett grudgingly.

'Well, ma'am, that's not my opinion, Mrs. J. And I always have thought, and well you know it—that if you and me were to put our heads together—I could make you think different.'

'Bowles!' Mrs. Jemmett's tone was awful. 'You trench, man, you trench!'

'Well, ma'am—' audaciously—'what if we were to try? You don't think—'

'I don't think of no such things,' Mrs. Jemmett retorted. But a smile trembled on her lips.

THE END.

### THE HEINE OF THE 'HARZREISE.'

JUST over a hundred years ago, one early morning in September 1824, Harry Heine, a young man of twenty-seven, turned his back upon the Pandects, the professors and the Philistines of Göttingen to roam on foot over the Harz mountains. In May 1826 the first volume of the 'Reisebilder' was published. In the interval between these two events Heine had taken his diploma in law, been baptised a Protestant, spent his first summer among the bathers and fishing folk of Norderney, written the first half of his unrhymed 'Nordsee' poems, and come to the conclusion that he could never succeed as a lawyer in Hamburg. 'I have never been able to succeed in making myself a nesting-place anywhere,' he wrote to Varnhagen von Ense; 'this talent, possessed in a high degree by insects and a few *Doctores juris* here, is absolutely wanting in me.' Thenceforward he was to be nothing but a wanderer, a writer, and a poet. In the days of Napoleon's triumph his mother had dreamt for him the meteoric career of a Ney or a Junot: mathematics were drummed into the boy's head till Waterloo dispelled that dream. Then for a short space trade awoke, and Harry was to become a merchant prince: he began in the approved fashion of merchant adventurers by falling in love with his employer's (and uncle's) daughter, and he traded in velveteens and other Manchester goods, but the daughter married another man, his agency went bankrupt, and this dream vanished in its turn. Law was now to be the talisman. Harry should be a lawyer, a man of affairs, doubtless a *Geheimrat* and Cabinet Minister. The mother sold her jewels to pay for his training, and Harry, with mixed feelings of duty and disgust, studied law at Düsseldorf, Göttingen, Berlin, and again at Göttingen. Incidentally he had become a well-known poet. But he had neglected to learn the art of getting on in this world, and his own dreams, which were full of passion and bitterness, ghosts and fury, came truer than his mother's. As he had sung in one of his earliest poems, the angels could not prevail against the Kobolds, who hemmed in ever closer the poet who had sacrificed happiness for passion:

'Und immer enger wird der Kreis,  
 Und immer summt die Schauerweis :  
 " Du gabest hin die Seligkeit,  
 Gehörst uns nun in Ewigkeit ! " '

I sometimes wonder whether we have any impression of Heine that resembles reality. When a great singer like Elena Gerhardt sings 'Ade' or 'Die Stadt,' when Reinhold von Warlich enchants us with the 'Dichterliebe,' the personality of Heine is subtilised away in the magic of the music. He seems a disembodied spirit, prompting with words of young love and disappointed passion the masters of melody, no more tangible than that Müller who would have breathed the 'Winterreise' in vain had his sentimental whisper not reached Schubert's ear. And, at best, if with a little more knowledge and sympathy we mentally embody the poet after the song is over, it is as the German youth who lost his heart 'in the lovely month of May,' whose dearest images were roses and violets, lilies and nightingales, and who, having buried 'the old bad songs' in a coffin as big as the Heidelberg tun, wandered enthusiastically over the Harz, listening to the fairy tales of miners' little daughters, or sat upon the beach at Norderney singing light love-songs to pretty fisher maidens.

'Du schönes Fischermädchen  
 Treibe den Kahn ans Land ;  
 Komm zu mir and setze dich nieder,  
 Wir kosen Hand in Hand.'

We allow him a broken, if not irremediably broken, heart, a sharp wit and a little irony, but not hate nor despairing bitterness. They came later. The poet of the 'Dichterliebe,' the 'Bergidylle,' and the 'Harzreise' was at the height neither of his art nor of his sorrows. He is immortal, indeed, and doubly so by the mighty aid of Schubert and Schumann ; but in a centenary retrospect at the younger Heine we cannot omit a glance at the Heine of later years.

To the generations of Carlyle and George Eliot, themselves inspired by Coleridge, German literature seemed all important ; then the reverence began to fade away, and the communications, finally cut by the war, have not yet been re-established. Yet, I fancy, the work of Heine had little part in this florescence and decline. His star did not rise with that of Hegel and Schopenhauer, nor wane with that of Nietzsche. In his own time and in later times he was never 'in the movement,' neither did he stand so conspicuously outside it that, like Byron, he could present himself to

the eye of Europe as, in his very revolt, a striking negation of it. His contempt for mediocrity and slavishness resounded clearly enough in Germany, where he alienated his own generation by his impetuous and uncontrollable irony. He could not measure his blows. It was his tragic fate to expose himself in an excellent cause to every kind of slander, as undutiful to his family, as reprehensible in his morals, as ungrateful to his country, and blasphemous to his country's God. In happier circumstance he might finally have triumphed, but necessity, ill-health, and voluntary exile pinned him to the ground. On the other hand, there was a strong and solid German strand in his complicated nature from which, in part, he feathered his arrows. It weighed them down: they flew to their mark, but low, and lay forgotten. And so it happens that the impassioned champion of revolution, the hater of church and hereditary nobility, the brilliant pamphleteer, and the satiric poet of 'Atta Troll' has made little impression outside Germany. We even forget that the Heine of the 'Harzreise,' who trod so sharply on the toes of his provincial University and could blandly write:

'The blue silk coverlet of the sky was so transparent, that one could look deep into it right into the Holy of Holies, where the angels sit at the feet of God, and in the features of His countenance study thorough-bass,'

already bore witness to more than roses and lilies.

It was in 1826 that the last effort of the kindly spirits to find Heine a resting-place was defeated; thenceforward the dark powers drove him onwards unopposed, giving him pleasure but never happiness, fame but seldom friendship, security only in exile, and a resting-place, at last, upon a bed of lingering death. Like a man under a curse, yet with no crime to his account, he was driven into the wilderness, where he became an unhappy celebrity. The edge of his highest aspirations—freedom, patriotism, enlightenment—was turned against his own good name. With a pen too sharp and ink too mordant he offended where he hoped to inspire, and pierced a thousand inoffensive souls where he meant but to pink one enemy. He was a man divided against his time and against himself; that was his life's tragedy, beside which the unhappy love-story of his youth seems of small account.

Ideally, however, we are perhaps right to forget the brilliant, angry, and unhappy polemist of later life. Though the art of the 'Lyrisches Intermezzo' and the 'Harzreise' is unripe, the best side of Heine's genius is visible in them. The second book of the



'Reisebilder' and the later poems of the 'Buch der Lieder' show it in full floescence, with all his extraordinary power of poetic concentration and that elastic vigour in his prose which might have placed him on a pinnacle not far from Goethe. Unfortunately, owing to the Kobolds, the Heine of Paris was, as the Italians say, 'non più quello.' At the same time, our disembodied spirit is an abstraction that will bear a little clothing; and in the course of clothing it we must unwrap the bright veils of music flung round its poetry, lest we confuse the enchantments of the composer with the virtues of the poet. The perfection of Heine's poetry has sometimes been exaggerated, though not usually by his countrymen. Indeed, from the point of view of artistic achievement and originality it might be maintained that his prose was far greater than his poetry; it is unique in German literature. Yet, this being said and the technical imperfections of his lyrics, which Heine himself deplored, being admitted, there remains after all sifting a residue of pure poetry that will go on resounding for ever by that magic property attending all perfect crystallisations of poetic feeling. Moreover, the 'Buch der Lieder' and the 'Harzreise' belong to that shelf of familiar books which, apart from all computations and deductions of criticism, we prize as wholes, for themselves. We love them, in all their alternations of tenderness and humour, of pathos and irony, of strength and weakness, for something that comes secretly home to our hearts. Perhaps Heine's secret, after all, was that of music—of his own music. In the sequence of his rhymes and stanzas, as in the swifter progress of his prose, there are tones and rhythms that have in them 'etwas heimliches,' reminding us of half-remembered sweets and sorrows, like refrains of old songs and cow-bells upon the hillside. They haunt us and we cannot forget them.

Let us then give our young Heine as much solidity as we can, and give it quickly out of the 'Harzreise.' It was no disembodied spirit who stepped briskly out at the Weender Thor on that September morning, as the birds were singing, gave his blue trousers to the waiter at Nörten to lighten his knapsack, laughed at the gentleman who looked like Nebuchadnezzar in his later years, and roguishly noted the physical features of the ill-favoured ladies while he lunched at Nordheim, slept like a god at Osterode, and dreamed an Aristophanic dream wherein figured the goddess Themis and all the symbols of legal pedantry. And this young man of twenty-seven was not the wan, dolorous minstrel that readers of his already published 'Junge Leiden' and 'Lyrisches Intermezzo' might have

imagined. Heine, like the hero of his youthful and very Gothic tragedy 'William Ratcliff,' would certainly have said of himself that he was no feeble 'moonshine-hero,' no twopence-coloured huntsman pursued by his own greyhound Fancy, no sick, consumptive poet who hangs himself with a string of verses on the tree of his own renown :

'Glaub' nicht, ich sei ein weicher Mondscheinheld,  
Ein Bilderjäger, der vom eigenen Windhund,  
Von Phantasie, durch Nacht und Höll' gehetzt wird,  
Ein magenkrank, schwindsüchtelnder Poet,  
Der mit den Sternen Unzucht treibt, der Leibschmerz  
Vor Rührung krieget, wenn Nachtigallen trillern,  
Der sich aus Seufzern eine Leiter baut,  
Und endlich mit dem Strick verschlungner Reime  
Sich aufhängt an der Säule seines Ruhms.'

Seeds of sickness there were indeed in his soul and in his body, but for a few weeks he cast them out of his memory with all the textbooks and Philistines of Göttingen. He set out for the hills a German student ; and perhaps only those who have once had—and possibly never lost—an affectionate feeling for certain sides of German life and character, will appreciate all that it meant to be a German student on a holiday—a jovial, poetical, simple and sensuous creature, bursting sentimentally out of scholastic trammels, narrower than any we have known, into the arms of a comfortably smiling Nature, into the pine woods where, through the song of the birds and the whispering of the branches, there murmured the refrains of a hundred familiar folksongs, over the heath where the Jäger of tradition wound his traditional 'waldhorn,' eating heartily, drinking copiously, carolling under the sun and dreaming beneath the moon, in the very atmosphere of those legends and fairy tales to whose rhythm every German cradle is rocked :

'Durch die Tannen will ich schweifen,  
Wo die muntre Quelle springt,  
Wo die stolzen Hirsche wandeln,  
Wo die liebe Drossel singt.

'Auf die Berge will ich steigen,  
Auf die schroffen Felsenhöhn,  
Wo die grauen Schlossruinen  
In dem Morgenlichte stehn.

'Dorten setz' ich still mich nieder  
 Und gedenke alter Zeit,  
 Alter blühender Geschlechter  
 Und versunkner Herrlichkeit.' <sup>1</sup>

Yes, the young Heine, despite his contempt for the Philistine, was Germanic enough. He could describe with gusto the spring-green parsley soup, the violet cabbage, the 'Kalbsbraten large as a miniature Chimborazo' and the smoked herrings of the inn at Klausthal, yet dwell with tenderness upon the staunch, patriarchal simplicity of Klausthal's people, the flowered dress of the old woman that had been her mother's wedding gown, the legends that lurked in the ancient wardrobes, the stoves, the very pins and needles of the cottages, and the 'deutsche Treue' of the honest miners. He could ecstasise over the shepherd boys and the cow-bells 'so lieblich rein und klar gestimmt'; he could surrender his mocking spirit to the magic of the glade where

'es murmelt und rauscht so wunderbar, die Vögel singen abgebrochene Sehnsuchtslaute, die Bäume flüstern wie mit tausend Mädchenzungen, wie mit tausend Mädchenaugen schauen uns an die seltsamen Bergblumen, sie strecken nach uns aus die wundersam breiten, drollig gezackten Blätter, spielend flimmern hin und her die lustigen Sonnenstrahlen, die sinnigen Kräutlein erzählen sich grüne Märchen, es ist Alles wie verzaubert, es wird immer heimlicher und heimlicher, ein uralter Traum wird lebendig, die Geliebte erscheint—ach, dass sie so schnell wieder verschwindet!' <sup>2</sup>

How German a period, with those vibrant words of German sentiment for which English has no equivalent—'Sonnenstrahlen,' 'Märchen,' 'verzaubert,' 'heimlich,' 'Traum,' and 'die Geliebte!' He could listen entranced to the stories told him by the miner's little child, while she wound her golden locks round his fingers, and the

<sup>1</sup> 'I will roam up through the pine trees where the jolly spring breaks out, where the proud shepherds wander and the glad throistle sings. I will climb the mountains and the steepy rocky heights where the grey castle ruins stand in the morning light. There will I sit down silent and think of olden time, of vigorous races of bygone men and vanished splendour.'

<sup>2</sup> 'There is such a wonderful murmur and rustling, the birds sing broken calls of longing, the trees whisper with the tongues of a thousand maidens, and the strange hill-flowers with a thousand maidens' eyes regard us; they spread out towards us their wonderful broad and quaintly scalloped leaves, while the merry rays of the sun dart hither and thither at play and the thoughtful plants tell green fairy tales to one another: all is bewitched and grows ever more and more eerie, a world-old dream comes alive, the Beloved appears—alas, that she disappears again so quickly!'

clock ticked gravely and the zither faintly murmured in the silent, friendly parlour.

'Und im stillen Zimmer Alles  
Blickt mich an so wohlvertraut;  
Tisch und Schrank, mir ist als hätt' ich  
Sie schon früher mal geschaut.

'Freundlich ernsthaft schwatzt die Wanduhr,  
Und die Zither, hörbar kaum,  
Fängt von selber an zu klingen,  
Und ich sitze wie im Traum.'

He could dream of the Princess Ilse in her enchanted castle, stand in solemn emotion while the sun set upon the Brocken, then join heartily in the nocturnal orgy with his bibulous fellows, clamber noisily with them down the mountain side next morning, and write sincerely, freethinker that he was, 'Gott hat den Menschen erschaffen, damit er die Herrlichkeit der Welt bewundere.' This was the Heine, though not the whole Heine, of the 'Harzreise.' In spite of certain passages of mockery and a few malicious asides, his first book of discursive prose charms us most by the honest artlessness of its sentiment and humour. We can nearly all of us look back to similar days and kindred feelings, when to be alive was very heaven, when no idea was too foolish to be repressed, when the simplest jest seemed exquisite and eggs and bacon divine. These expansive, uncritical moods are, in general, less apt for poetry than for affectionate reminiscence, but Heine made of his 'Harzreise' both poetry and prose that have lived. Not only did he capture in words the spell cast by the summer air, the birds and the breezes, over the youthful spirit mounting upwards to the hill-tops, but he enshrined in the 'Berg Idylle' the essential poetry of the Harz, the essential flower to be plucked, not a rare blossom perhaps, but individual and smelling sweetly of fairy tales, romantic feelings, and intimate domesticity.

The solid German Heine, now tender, now boisterous, was not extinguished all at once. We find him again in the poems and prose written at Norderney and in many pages of childhood's reminiscence which come into that strange mixture of genuine beauty and artificial wit called 'Das Buch Legrand.' He was no longer the student, it is true, yet there is a strong bond of kinship between the student who whispered confidences to little Goldilocks in the miner's

cottage and the man two years older who told the *Fischermädchen* stories of distant lands and how his heart was like the sea, with storms on its surface and pearls in its depths.

'Mein Herz gleicht ganz dem Meere,  
Hat Sturm und Ebb' und Flut,  
Und manche schöne Perle  
In seiner Tiefe ruht.'

His dream of the Meerfrau is but another version of the Princess Ilse; his adoration of the sea is as naïvely ecstatic as of the Bergzauber; and the rather crudely elemental humour of the Brocken-orgy has developed into the bardic enthusiasm of the 'Nordseebilder,' those Pindaric, apostrophic odes to the elements and classic deities of the coast, mixed with comic-heroic interludes like 'Im Hafen' or the end of 'Die Nacht am Strande':

'Siehst du, mein Kind, ich halte Wort  
Und ich komme, und mit mir kommt  
Die alte Zeit, wo die Götter des Himmels  
Niederstiegen zu Töchtern der Menschen,  
Und die Töchter der Menschen umarmten,  
Und mit ihnen zeugten  
Sceptertragende Königsgeschlechter  
Und Helden, Wunder der Welt.  
Doch staune, mein Kind, nicht länger  
Ob meiner Göttlichkeit,  
Und, ich bitte dich, koche mir Thee mit Rum,  
Denn draussen war's kalt,  
Und bei solcher Nachtluft  
Frieren auch wir, wir ewigen Götter,  
Und kriegen wir leicht den Göttlichsten Schnupfen  
Und einen unsterblichen Husten.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'See, child, I keep my word  
And I come, and with me comes  
The olden time, when the Gods of Heaven  
Came down to the daughters of men,  
And embraced the daughters of men,  
And with them begat  
Sceptre-bearing races of kings  
And heroes, the world's wonder.  
Yet be no more astonished, child,  
At my divinity,  
And, I pray thee, make me tea with rum,  
For it was cold without,  
And in such night air  
We freeze, even we, the eternal Gods,  
And easily catch the most godlike colds  
And an immortal cough.'

Heine referred in his letters to what he called these 'kolossalen Epigrammen' with too much complacency, perhaps; for, though they have eloquence and force, they are also artificial, being inspired not so much by a real love of the sea as by a self-conscious rapture of a somewhat soul-sick landsman in the sea's wildness, its purity and its richness in mythical suggestion. Nevertheless, these poems and the prose written in 1826—'Norderney' and 'Das Buch Legrand'—do betray, to use Heine's own words, a certain 'reinen, urbehaglichen Humor' which belonged to the solid Heine. The reminiscences of his schooldays and the pathetic recollections of 'die kleine, todte Veronica' and her sisters who were his playmates at Godesberg belong to the same part of his character that was so sharply at variance with the other side, the side of irrepressible 'Witz, Ironie, Laune.' This side of the angels—the German angels—remained alive till the last, witness the poems written on his visit to Hamburg in 1842: 'O Deutschland, meine ferne Liebe,' 'Denk' ich an Deutschland in der Nacht' and the rest. And later, in Paris, whither he had fled from the narrowness and servility of Germany, he imagined the German Nightwatchman answering his question 'Ist schon befreit das Vaterland?' with the assurance that, with no French superficiality, but with a hidden profundity, freedom was growing in the German soul.

'Vortrefflich geht es, der stille Segen,  
Er wuchert im sittlich gehüteten Haus,  
Und ruhig und sicher, auf friedlichen Wegen,  
Entwickelt sich Deutschland von innen heraus.

'Nicht oberflächlich, wie Frankreich, blüht es,  
Wo Freiheit das äussere Leben bewegt;  
Nur in der Tiefe des Gemüthes  
Ein Deutscher Mann die Freiheit trägt.'

Yet we must not insist too strongly on this side of Heine, which he called the side of reason. It was the side to which the originality of his actual work was least due. The suffering Heine, the Heine impassioned for ideals and embittered by their rejection, the Heine of 'Witz, Ironie, Laune,' is the one whose art moves us chiefly to admiration. The Heine of the 'Harzreise' already knew himself. He visited Goethe while on that journey, and in 1825 he wrote to his friend Moses Moser a comparison between himself and the older poet whose sun was splendidly setting. Goethe, he said,

was a lighthearted 'Lebemensch,' for whom the enjoyment of life was the most important thing and who felt and expressed life without deep understanding or experience. He himself, on the contrary, was a 'Schwärmer,' driven by enthusiasm for ideas to the pitch of self-sacrifice and forced to immerse himself in them.

'And now there is in me a great fight between my clear reasonableness, which approves the enjoyment of life and puts aside all self-sacrificing enthusiasm as something foolish, and my "schwärmerisch" tendency which often springs up unexpectedly, takes powerful hold on me and perhaps drags me down again into its age-old kingdom.'

However, it was not this susceptibility alone of which the Kobolds made use to combat the angels; there were also the sharp temper, the uncontrollable tongue, the mocking wit and the inflammable but easily embittered heart. Heine sadly confessed these qualities, to which were due his irreconcilable quarrel with his uncle Salomon, the alienation of his friends and his exposure to the spite of his enemies. He was possessed at times, like his uncle, by an 'incalculable madness.' Moreover, it was not for nothing that as a boy he fell under the spell of Don Quixote; the image of the dolorous knighthood fighting single-handed against the powers of evil remained with him always. Thus even in the 'Berg-Idylle' he sang to the miner's daughter:

'Nun, so schau mich an, mein Kindchen,  
Küsse mich und schaue dreist;  
Denn ich selber bin ein solcher  
Ritter von dem heil'gen Geist.'

But the Christian resignation which should be the chain armour of such knights was wholly wanting in Heine. Opposition made his heart burn with revengeful fires and drove him to ply the weapon which his genius had given him with a malicious joy. It was the 'Harzreise' which revealed to him the power of this weapon, his prose—that cutting, deadly weapon handled with such swiftness, such elegance, and such a sparkle of ironic imagery. Of the second volume of the 'Reisebilder' he said it was a ship of war, and later, when writing the 'Italienische Reise,' he promised therein 'to come to a reckoning with all my enemies. I have made a list of all those who have tried to annoy me, so that in my present feeble mood I



may forget none.' On one occasion he bewailed to Varnhagen von Ense the 'ironic fate' that he, who only wished to live comfortably with all men, should have to use the whip upon the German people; yet the fact was that he used the whip, not as Christ in the temple, but rather with the savage glee of Boyer, Charles Lamb's headmaster. He was neurotic and over-sensitive; too easily wounded in his love and in his idealism, he readily salved his injuries with the counterpoisons of cynicism and contempt. Thus was spoiled one who might have been Germany's greatest comic writer and poet. All chapter 15 of 'Das Buch Legrand,' in which he wittily deplores the conflict in his breast between 'Vernunft' (Reason), and 'Nartheit' (Folly) is really a bitter confession. 'Ich weiss sehr gut,' he says, 'meine Stellung ist unnatürlich; Alles was ich thue, ist den Vernünftigen eine Thorheit und den Narren ein Greuel' ('Folly to the wise, and to fools an abomination'). And he imagines, with a comic ruefulness, with what open arms the 'Vernünftigen' would have welcomed the repentant brother back to their tea-tables and clubs. But his touch of Nature was not of the kind that makes all men kin; like Swift, he was too original.

The young Heine was a true lyric poet, though it must be admitted that to read his later love-poetry, the 'Neuer Frühling' and the other sequences addressed to Seraphine, Angélique, Diana, Hortense and the rest, is to feel the edge of the 'Buch der Lieder' a little blunted. One realises how easily the epigram of passion, half sentimental, half bitter, came to his particular talent, and recognises that it was not necessarily the sign of a deep tragedy. Heine was a lover of women, a difficult lover probably, but by no means unsuccessful. Nevertheless, his unhappy passion for Amalie Heine, his first love of all, was a deep and lasting tragedy. Amalie married another in 1821, and in the same year Heine published the 'Junge Leiden' and the 'Lyrisches Intermezzo,' to which he afterwards referred as his 'malitiös-sentimentale Lieder.' Though the Heine of the 'Harzreise,' who had left this love at least three years behind him, was not, as we know, above dalliance with the fair maid of Goslar, and in the following year he lost his heart again to the unknown heroine of his poem:

'Sie liebten sich beide, doch keiner  
Wollt' es dem andern gestehn;  
Sie sahen sich an so feindlich  
Und wollten vor Liebe vergehn.

'Sie trennten sich endlich und sahn sich  
Nur noch zuweilen im Traum ;  
Sie waren längst gestorben  
Und wussten es selber kaum,'<sup>1</sup>

and the ladies who inspired 'Du bist wie eine Blume' and 'Mädchen mit dem roten Mündchen' have also to be reckoned, yet the memory of his first beloved remained with him till his death : every return to Hamburg opened the old wound anew. No irony or cynicism healed that hurt, and the best of Heine's early poems are the cries of his agony. That is why, in spite of the uncertainty of their execution and an excess of sentimentality, the 'Lyrisches Intermezzo' and 'Die Heimkehr' continue to live a poetic life of their own apart from the wonderful music that has sometimes raised their weaker parts into the earthly paradise of beauty. For a pure lyrical expression of love and loveliness Heine cannot touch Burns, who used the folk-song with a far greater poetic genius. Beside the glorious freshness and lilt of 'O my Luve's like a red, red rose' Heine's 'rose and lily and dove and sun' seem tame enough ; it was the snakes and the poison that made his poetry great—the sense of mutual enmity in love, the ache of known inconstancy, the torture of a lover's slavery and despair for lost hope and happiness. He had the power of suggesting an immeasurable misery in a few simple words strung together on a rhythm as compelling as a death-knell. His tragic feeling was intensely self-centred, it is true, and he could never have written 'Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,' in which Burns, like the sad nightingale, sings the whole world's suffering for all love betrayed ; yet as soon as the sombre note is touched with 'Ich grolle nicht' the 'Lyrisches Intermezzo' rises to a new degree of power from which no relapses into sheer German tearfulness—such as 'Und wussten's die Blumen, die kleinen, wie tief verwundet mein Herz'—can pull it down. The poet's unbearable longing for a lost and fickle love, if not the noblest of passions and one somewhat too fondly dramatised, broke out in the authentic voice of true poetry. Heine played 'der arme Peter' for all he was worth, and that was not a little. 'Wir haben viel für einander gefühlt,' 'Aus meinen grossen Schmerzen,' 'Ein Jungling liebt ein Mädchen,' 'Wenn zwei von einander scheiden,' 'Vergiftet sind meine Lieder,' 'Ich hab' im Traum geweinet,' the ballad-like 'Nacht lag auf

<sup>1</sup> 'They were in love, each with each, but neither would tell the other. They gave one another cruel looks while ready to swoon with love. At last they parted and only at times saw each other in dreams. They had long been dead, but they hardly knew it themselves.'

meinen Augen' and 'Die alten, bösen Lieder,' in all of which the bitter feeling is heightened by the plaintive domesticity of the language, have mingled this particular note of Heine's love-bitterness with the higher music of lyric poetry. This note sounded with still more tragic potency in those poems of 'Die Heimkehr'—which is a collection of very varied inspirations—that were forced from his heart by his return in 1823 to the scene of his unhappy love. These five poems, beginning with that known in song as 'Die Stadt,' are the high-water mark of his love-poetry, and it was the Heine of the 'Harzreise' who wrote them. In every line of the first is heard the dull, heavy thud of the oar that rowed a heavy heart back to the scene of its sorrow.

'Am fernen Horizonte  
Erscheint, wie ein Nebelbild,  
Die Stadt mit ihren Turmen  
In Abenddämmerung gehüllt.

'Ein feuchter Windzug krauselt  
Die graue Wasserbahn;  
Mit traurigem Takte rudert  
Der Schiffer in meinem Kahn.

'Die Sonne hebt sich noch einmal  
Leuchtend vom Boden empor,  
Und zeigt mir jene Stelle,  
Wo ich das Liebste verlor.'<sup>1</sup>

As he greets the 'grosse, geheimnisvolle Stadt' and wanders in the well-known lanes about his loved one's house, the heaviness grows to an intolerable torture and finally bursts out into the agonised cry of 'Der Doppelgänger,' that unforgettable poem.

'Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen,  
In diesem Hause wohnte mein Schatz;  
Sie hat schon längst die Stadt verlassen,  
Doch steht noch das Haus auf demselben Platz.

'Da steht auch ein Mensch und starrt in die Höhe  
Und ringt die Hände vor Schmerzensgewalt;  
Mir graust es, wenn ich sein Antlitz sehe—  
Der Mond zeigt mir meine eigne Gestalt.

<sup>1</sup> 'On the far horizon appears, like a mirage, the town with its towers shrouded in the dusk. A moist breeze ruffles the grey water's face; the boatman rows my boat with a doleful stroke. The sun rises once more shining from the earth, and shows me that place where I lost my beloved.'

'Du Doppelgänger! du bleicher Geselle!  
Was äffst du nach mein Liebesleid,  
Das mich gequält auf dieser Stelle  
So manche Nacht in alter Zeit?'<sup>1</sup>

This poem in its rhythm, its emotional attitude and its vocabulary of pain seems to me—though perhaps it is impossible to shut one's ear to the echo of the immortal music in which Schubert has expressed its agony—to contain the essence of Heine's love-poetry.

Space is too short for enlargement upon the other strings of Heine's lyre—the cynical wit, for instance, exemplified in:

'O König Wiswamitra  
O welch ein Ochs bist du,  
Dass du so viel kämpfest und büssest,  
Und Alles für ein Kuh!'—

the Aristophanic humour of 'Atta Troll' and the peculiar ironical touch with which he treated the ballad, not to speak of the rare note of disinterested pathos sounding in the beautiful 'Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar.' As life went on, the smoke of controversy obscured his purely lyric flame. As he cried to Phoebus Apollo on one of his prefaces: 'Du weisest, warum die Flamme, die einst in brillanten Feuerwerkspielen die Welt ergötzte, plötzlich zu weit ernsteren Bränden verwenden werden musste.' Those other conflagrations have, by now, somewhat lost their importance, yet to that inextinguishable fire in his heart we owe, not only his best poetry, but the most memorable passages of his prose. His love of freedom was as fiery as his love of women: he hated with all the passion of love betrayed. And, in his political idealism, he focussed this fire upon the French Revolution and the figure of Napoleon. As Stendhal in Italy, so he in Germany saw in Napoleon a new and glorious light, too soon extinguished, that was destined to cleanse away the rubbish of ages from the minds, the cities, and the court of men. His famous poem of 'The Two Grenadiers' is but a single spark of that flame. Its full force was gathered together in the vivid descriptions and brilliant reflections of 'Das Buch Legrand,'

<sup>1</sup> 'Still is the night, the lanes are still. In this house dwelt my sweetheart. She has long since left the town, but the house yet stands in the same spot. There too stands a creature who stares into the sky and wrings his hands in the grip of his grief: I shudder when I see his face—the moon shows me, it is my own. Thou ghostly double! Thou wan-faced fellow! Why dost thou ape my throes of grief, which pierced me through upon this spot so many a night long, long ago?'

particularly in the passages describing Düsseldorf in the day when the French Army entered, when Tambour-major Legrand drummed 'the new history' of the revolutionary wars to the lad Harry in the lime-walk of the Hofgarten, and when the great Emperor himself rode through that same garden, smiling and patting his white horse's neck. Napoleon's eye, clear as the heavens, took in all the things of the world at a single glance, and his brow was clouded by the shadow of the thoughts 'wherewith the Emperor's spirit strode invisibly over the world.' The next chapter opens with the fatal words, 'Der Kaiser ist tot.' What hopes entombed, what dreams dispersed, what inextinguishable anger kindled! At least, Heine ironically reflects, a dreadful fate befell Napoleon's three chief opponents. 'Londonderry hat sich die Kehle abgeschnitten, Ludwig XVIII ist auf seinem Throne verfault, und Professor Saalfeld ist noch immer Professor in Göttingen.' But the heat of the fire is reserved for the end of the chapter, wherein he imagines a second meeting with the old drum-major, stumbling through the streets of Düsseldorf with a squad of weather-beaten comrades, ghosts of past glory set free at last from prison in Siberia. The poet and the drum-major sit down together once more upon the grass, and, on the same old drum, M. Legrand plays his last tattoo in silence. Again that sound pierces the poet's marrow. The drum-taps of Legrand evoke again the wars of liberty, the thunder of the guns, the whine of bullets, the fluttering standards and the Emperor on his white horse. But a troubled tone gradually creeps in upon this merry noise—a tone of wildest enthusiasm and direst sorrow, a march of triumph and of death.

'Ich hätte nie gedacht, dass die alte, harte Trommel so schmerzliche Laute von sich geben könnte, wie jetzt Monsieur Legrand daraus hervorzulocken wusste. Es waren getrommelte Thränen, und sie tönnten immer leiser, und wie ein trübes Echo brachen tiefe Seufzer aus der Brust Legrand's. Und dieser wurde immer matter und gespenstischer, seine dürrn Hände zitterten vor Frost, er sass wie im Traume, und bewegte mit seinen Trommelstöcken nur die Luft, und horchte wie auf ferne Stimmen, und endlich schaute er mich an mit einem tiefen, abgrundtiefen, siehenden Blick—ich verstand ihn—and dann sank sein Haupt herab auf die Trommel.

'Monsieur Legrand hat in diesem Leben nie mehr getrommelt. Auch seine Trommel hat nie mehr einen Ton von sich gegeben, sie sollte keinem Feinde der Freiheit zu einem servilen Zapfenstreich dienen, ich hatte den letzten, siehenden Blick Legrand's sehr gut

verstanden, und zog sogleich den Degen aus meinem Stock und zerbrach die Trommel.'<sup>1</sup>

This magnificent passage, vibrating with all the intensity of a poet's lamentation, was written in 1826, two years after the 'Harzreise.' In two years of ill-health, conflict, and irritation the spirit of that jovial student had grown indeed stronger, harder, and sharper. He had grown out of his own country, as Henri Beyle grew, but, unlike that other Henry, he was not content in exile. He ached for transplantation back to the native land from whose heavy soil and oppressive airs he had fled in desperation. He ached in vain. One who had been bewitched by the drum of the dying Legrand could never go back. He was driven forth, when that drum was silenced, with a mark upon him. No wonder that he laid aside the lyre of Apollo to take up those other weapons of the god of poetry, the bows and arrows.

ORLO WILLIAMS.

<sup>1</sup> 'I should never have thought that the hard old drum could give out such sorrowful notes as M. Legrand was able to charm from it. They were tears in drum-taps, and they sounded fainter and fainter, and like a troubled echo deep sighs broke out of Legrand's breast. And he began to look more and more doleful and ghostly, his withered hands trembled with cold, he sat as if in a dream, and with his drumsticks only beat the air, listening as if to far-off voices; and at last he looked at me with a piercing look, deep as a chasm—I understood him—and then his head sank down upon the drum.

'Monsieur Legrand drummed no more in this life. And his drum, too, never gave out another sound, for never should it serve an enemy of freedom for some servile tattoo. I had well understood that last piercing look of Legrand's; at once I drew the sword from my sword-stick and burst the drum.'

## LA VENTE DES VINS DES HOSPICES DE BEAUNE

### BEAUNE AND ITS WINE SALE

EVERYONE who has travelled southwards from Paris by the P.L.M. knows of Dijon. But to most of us it is a place where, in the small hours of the morning, numerous engines see fit to scream with that high note of appalling penetration peculiar to French railway engines, and an apparently deserted station is full of noise. The *couchettes* turn over and curse the destroyers of their sleep; the *deuxièmes* rearrange their pillows and the bags beneath their knees in the well of the carriage and wish that their neighbour was not so full of corners; while the *troisièmes*, well shaken together in the four hours' run from Paris, alone fail to be concerned in the matter. But those who dare to get out at Dijon in the small hours—it is difficult to get there at all in daylight unless by omnibus—have their reward.

For Dijon is a delightful Renaissance town of odd corners and turrets and bits of roofs and things; full of history and of present consequence. It is the capital of Burgundy, and has held that proud position since Burgundy became a duchy of the Royal House of Capet about A.D. 1100.

In 1361 the last of the Capet dukes died and the duchy passed to the Crown. Four years later it was granted by Charles V to the family of Valois, and the next hundred years, during which the four Valois dukes, Philippe le Hardi, Philippe le Bon, Jean sans Peur, and Charles le Téméraire, ruled in Dijon, are the glory of Burgundy. France was as yet hardly a nation, but a group of duchies; and Burgundy, stretching from Flanders to Avignon, from sea to sea, right through the middle of France as we know it, was the most brilliant and powerful Court in the land. It is this period whose stamp is still on the town, and the Flemish connection then established persists. It is visible everywhere in the streets; and the best of the Burgundy wine goes to Belgium to-day.

But on this occasion we had no time to stay at Dijon. At 1 A.M. on a bitter November night we emerged from the shrieking station and paddled through the mist to the hotel for a few hours' sleep before proceeding to Beaune. We had come straight through from London, and were to leave at eight next morning to attend the



great event of the year, the *fêtes vinicoles de Beaune*. The drive down served as a prelude for what was to come.

To the south of Dijon there is a line of low, very low, hills, and along the foot of them runs the road to Lyons. These hills are the Côte-d'Or, and along their golden slopes lie all the famous vineyards. The villages through which the road passes all give their names to the wines which come from the slopes above them, and to travel along it is like walking down a wine list. First, as it were at the top, comes Gevrey Chambertin and then Vougeot. To the south of the village the road skirts the 'Clos Vougeot' itself, and it was here that the Duc d'Orléans did one of the few things which are to be counted unto him for righteousness; for, marching along this very road one day at the head of his troops, he halted them and 'presented arms' to this prince of vineyards, which is ranked as 'Le Régent,' above whom 'Le Roi'—'Le Chambertin' and 'La Reine'—'La Romanée' alone take precedence, in 'La Famille Royale des Vins de Bourgogne' drawn up by that famous 'gourmand'—a 'gourmet' would scarce have dared to do it—Le Docteur Gastaldy. But the road cares for none of these things and runs on, straight and poplar edged, through Vosne, the district of the Romanée, to Nuits and so past the hill of Corton, with Aloxe nestling beneath it, to Beaune, and thence through Pommard and Volnay to Meursault. To the west the country rises gently to the ridge, while to the east it stretches, flat as a table, as far as the eye can see. From this little stretch of slope, from Chambertin to just past Beaune, some forty miles long and nowhere more than a mile wide, come all the wines deemed worthy of a name. Yet in this little strip there are some nine hundred individual *Clos*. The Clos Vougeot is a big one, and covers perhaps a dozen acres; but many can hardly boast an acre to their name and produce but three or four casks—say ten dozen bottles—a year. The flat country east of the road is merely the *Région des Grands Ordinaires*.

Beaune itself is a pleasant town with walls and battlements, though the ditch has become gardens long since. Its gracious Renaissance houses, carved and ornamented with turrets and *échauguettes*, tempt one to linger in its streets; but to-day everyone is hurrying to the crowning glory of the little town, the Hospices Civiles, where the tasting has already begun, and where the wine sales are to take place after *déjeuner*.

The 'Hospices Civiles de Beaune' was founded in 1441 by Nicolas Rollin, Chancellor to Philippe le Bon, third of the great Valois Dukes

of Burgundy, and his wife, Guigone de Salins. Plague had ravaged the country, so that in the words of the old chronicler: "*mouraient les gens de faim par les rues et par les champs. Et il fit tant de pôvres à Beaune que les bourgeois firent maisons communes pour les loger et se taillaient par septmaine un chascun, selon sa faculté, pour les pourventoir.*" To relieve this distress the Chancellor of the gay and brilliant Court at Dijon founded the hospices, part hospital, part almshouse. Outside the building presents a bare stone wall surmounted by a high-pitched roof, patterned with coloured tiles and topped by a tall delicate lantern decorated with lead tracery. The wall is broken by an enormous canopy overhanging the studded oak door with its big grille and knocker, on which for some five hundred years a fly has sat mocking the salamander which is perpetually about to pounce upon it. One penetrates into a dark passage, rather like the 'screens' of a college hall, from which opens the '*Salle des Pôvres.*' This is the almshouse part, and the public are freely admitted.

It is a huge hall with an open roof, whose beams are painted in red and green and yellow, colours crude enough in themselves, but blending in the dim height of the roof into an unexpected harmony. A long line of wooden beds, four-posters, runs up each side of the tiled floor. They date from the foundation, and are built into the floor, a yard out from the wall for service reasons, and also so that the inmate can, by pulling the bed curtains and others across this passage, make himself a little cubicle to dress in. Beside each bed stands a little table with a pewter plate, mug and jug, beautifully kept and in daily use, not for ornament; and across the top of the beds there is a bar, with a rope of plaited linen hanging from it, to assist the aged occupant to raise himself up. The far end of the hall is cut off by a screen, behind which is a chapel; and the beds are placed in these two long lines down the sides of the hall so that on Sundays, when the panels of the screen are taken out, the pensioners can lie in bed, heads away from the chapel end, and, with the public who come and sit in the centre of the hall, take part in the service.

The entrance passage leads into the '*Cour d'honneur,*' rough paved in stone and surrounded on three sides by the low buildings with their high, gabled, and gaily-tiled roofs. On two sides there is a double cloister, both galleries open to the court; the third is formed by the *Salle des Pôvres*, and Porter's Lodge; but the fourth side was rebuilt in the seventeenth century, and has a dull, heavy stone façade.

The Hospices was never a religious foundation, but was originally

staffed from a nursing sisterhood at Valenciennes; and moving about this courtyard at their work are the successors of these sisters. They still wear the dress of the Middle Ages—blue in winter, white in summer, with the hennin and long train caught up and hung by the waist. They are now all local ladies, volunteers—nay more, for on entering on the foundation each must bring a *dot* with her to pay for her keep for life. On the other hand, on Easter Day each receives an honorarium of a dozen eggs, one sou, and—since the dress is complicated—thirty-two pins. They all seem to be always busy. There is one presiding in the vast kitchen which opens off the lower cloister. It presents a curiously mixed appearance, for there is still the huge open fireplace with an elaborate mechanical turnspit of the fifteenth century; a little carved figure, 'Bertrand,' appears to turn it, and as the spit goes round he grinds away at his handle, but the work is really done by a weight; and then in the middle is a big double range—the last word in modernity—while standing on it and hanging on the walls are pots and pans of copper and pewter, of shapes and sizes long vanished from our kitchens. And the same mixture of old and new, the great charm of the place, appears in the dispensary, where another sister reigns amid Majolica pots with Latin names and huge copper retorts and bronze pestle and mortar and—test tubes!

For some twenty years ago the place was modernised and brought 'up to date' in accordance with the latest medical opinions, and 'up to date' it is kept as a modern hospital must be. But the mediaeval atmosphere was retained. The success has been amazing—one does walk literally into the world of five hundred years ago—yet the most modern treatments are given here as of course. In the second court are several more wards and the surgery, and away behind in the grounds is a nursing home with X-ray rooms and laboratories; while in the museum are complete copies of all the external decorations, the lead tracery, the gargoyles, weathervane, and tiles, so that should any accident befall, and anything be damaged or destroyed, it can immediately be accurately restored.

The Hospices has considerable endowments which take the somewhat unusual form of vineyards, scattered all along the *côte*, and on a Sunday in November of each year the produce of these vineyards is sold by public auction. This function, unique of its kind, is attended by immense crowds, and the *sommeliers* from the restaurants of Paris, Lyons, Bordeaux, Brussels, in fact from all over Europe, come to buy for their *maisons*.

The morning is given up to tasting. Formerly anybody who cared to come might taste, but of late years this has been abused, so a ticket must be obtained. Still, on payment of the modest sum of five francs one may proceed to the cellars. Here the wine to be sold is ranged by *cuvée* round the walls—a *cuvée* amounting to anything from three to seven casks. Beside each *cuvée* is a man armed with a glass tube like an enormous fountain pen filler. One pushes through the press and presents a *tasse de dégustation*, a little shallow cup of glass or silver (our host had a set of silver ones dating back to Louis XI), the man lowers his fountain pen filler into the cask, closes it with his thumb, withdraws it full, and directs a thin stream into the cup; one tastes, and rejects on to the floor, well covered with a thick carpet of gravel. Thus one proceeds round the cellar, pushing one's way from *cuvée* to *cuvée*, tasting and making notes on the programme, amid a babel of voluble Frenchmen in every conceivable variety of costume and beard—and so to *déjeuner*.

It is a state occasion, and *déjeuner* lasts two solid hours. Then the sale begins in a big marquee in the grounds, for the crowd is nowadays too great for the Council Chamber to be used. The whole of one of the long sides is taken up by the platform, and here the Président du Conseil, Vice-Président, and full Board take their seats. Behind them hang the tapestries from the Council Chamber, embroidered with the motto '*Seule*' which Nicolas Rollin took on marrying Guigone de Salins, his third wife, as a delicate intimation that she was to be the last; his ducal master in like circumstances was less equivocal, and took '*Aultre n'auray*' as his device.

The marquee is crowded to suffocation, and, lest any should be cold, two big stoves are blazing so fiercely that nobody can go within a yard of them. They make islands in this sea of voluble and excited Frenchmen, all of whom have lunched, and all of whom are talking, generally to a friend some distance off, at the tops of their voices. The President takes his seat and rings a large cow-bell, and in the comparative calm which follows reads out the preamble, the conditions of sale, and a long formula which nobody hears. He then calls the district, name, and quantity of the first lot. This is repeated by a gentleman standing behind. His face looks entirely wooden—he does not open and shut his mouth as other men do, but his jaw seems to slide up and down like that of a ventriloquist's doll. At this point a third functionary enters on operations. He is armed with a wooden contraption containing an endless supply of wicks, each long enough to burn

for about two minutes, and a lighted candle. The French law concerning auctions is to the effect that a bid, to be successful, must survive the remainder of the wick during which it is made, and the complete burning of a second, the extinction of the second corresponding to the fall of the hammer. If a new bid is called during the life of the second wick, that wick is treated as the first, and when it goes out another is lit; and so on until a whole wick has burnt through without a bid being called.

The President announces the price at which bidding is to start, but the amount of each 'step' is apparently in the discretion of the wooden-visaged caller. As the bidding starts the first wick is lit from the candle. The bids are called, in quick succession at first, and are repeated by the caller. When they begin to slow off and the second wick is nearing extinction without a fresh call, the caller cries '*Deuxième et dernier feu !*' ('going!—going!'), the wick goes out, and that lot is sold. The purchaser hands up his card; his name, address, and the price are announced by the President, and they start again on the next lot.

And so on for some five hours. But the proceedings are far from dull. Somebody suddenly announces, after the close of a sale, that the caller raised the price during the bidding by 500 francs when no such bid had been made. The President points out that the objection was not then taken; but the conditions of sale carefully omit any such provision as 'the auctioneer's decision shall be final,' and there is instant pandemonium. The President and his supporters, *privatim et seriatim*, discuss the point with the public at large; friend shouts to friend across the tent; spectators—for the majority of the crowd have no intention of purchasing or even of bidding—join in and twit the combatants, and the President plays a fantasia on the cow-bell. Order being in some measure restored, he announces that the bidding will be reopened—'*on va rallumer le feu*'—at the last undisputed figure. This starts a new discussion, but at last the wooden jaw begins to slide up and down again and the incident is closed.

A little later there is another disturbance; for on the President announcing '*Adjudgé*,' the official declaration of the completion of a sale, two people hand up their cards. The President appeals to the caller, who points to one of them as the last bidder. The second immediately protests that he too called the same bid at the same time, and believed himself alone in the field. Renewed hubbub, during which they apparently agree to abide by the

President's decision. One of the bidders is a local dealer and, to judge by the shouts, popular; his opponent is not without support; and the President, faced, like Mr. Pickwick, with two crowds of opposite sympathies, takes the advice of that student of human nature and shouts with the larger.

At last all is over, the year's income for the Hospices is realised. The Board and as many distinguished people as can be accommodated in the Mairie adjourn to a 'Grand Banquet d'honneur'; the rest to dinner at the inn. Next day Beaune resumes the placid life of a small country town—and begins to look forward to the *Fêtes Vinicoles* next year.

R. J. H. T.-R.

### A HORROR OF DARKNESS.

'I DIFFER entirely,' pronounced the Bug-Hunter. 'On the contrary, the entire animal creation, man included, has been, and is, physically deteriorating.'

Those who know Sgurrpenfell know that it is one of the few patches of earthly Paradise that remain in this thrice happy realm of ours, that it is advisable to write and book rooms three months in advance so as to make sure of getting an answer, that the telegram announcing your advent generally comes to hand two days after your arrival, that even the hardest of those H—— born (the filling in of the hiatus is optional), pass-storming motorists turn disconsolately away from surface and gradient. You are more alone than on the wide, wide sea, because the wireless knows not the existence of S.P.F., as its admirers call it. You can ramble, scramble, paint, or fish to your heart's content.

It is needless to say that those who frequent this delectable spot are of the elect, men of brains, muscle, and taste. On the occasion under consideration the little hostel was wellnigh full. The congregation consisted of almost a dozen men of brains, muscle, and taste. Opportunity of using the two latter was denied them as the rain was coming down in sheets and the wind howling like the Ride of the Valkyrie on a Salvation Army band. Wherefore they betook themselves to the consumption of tobacco and the discussion of matters they did not understand. This proved their brains, because, as Dennis O'Hara, the poet (the only poet of the S.P.F. community), observed: 'The man who talks about things he understands—supposing he does understand anything, which he doesn't—is a wet blanket who ought to be put to instant death by slow torture.'

It was the Professor of Comparative Astronomy, or words to that effect, who had teed off with a thesis that man was going on from strength to strength, supporting his argument with Channel swims and records, and it was the Bug-Hunter who took him up. [N.B.—It must be understood that the Bug-Hunter was not a professional shikari of domesticated insects. Nay! He was a practical naturalist, the kind of man who cheerfully mingles with crocodiles and cobras, cannibals and man-eaters, if by good fortune he may hit off the trail of a new beetle the size of a threepenny bit.]



The audience listened with a semblance of reverent attention that thinly veiled an eager anticipation of rotting as occasion offered. The Bug-Hunter warmed to his work.

'Now, look here,' he argued, 'what does it say? There were giants in those days. Quite. Now in the time of Goliath, the typical giant of all time, they were rare. And then he was not so much of a giant after all. David borrowed his sword later on for personal use, so he can't have been so very much smaller. Probably men were bigger all round then. And even to-day! Talk of a man twice my size. Rubbish! That would make him twelve feet high and eighty inches round the chest. Rot!'

He challenged the room with a glance. The room was puzzled. Could it be that in defiance of all the rules of the game the man was talking sense? Before a decision had been reached the Bug-Hunter had got his second wind.

'Then there's the animal kingdom. The mastodon and mammoth were bigger than the elephant. You meet pigmy elephants to-day, but giants never.'

'But surely,' broke in the Professor, 'in your explorations you have met some giants, some abnormally big things.'

He spoke seriously, in fact the whole room had become serious. There was something serious in the atmosphere, indefinable but existent, and the men knew it.

'Abnormally big, yes. Little giants, so to speak, but I have never met, say, a tiger six feet high at the shoulder, nor heard of one, or anything of that sort.'

'Are you quite sure—sure, I mean, that you have never even heard of a creature more than ordinarily large?'

The audience looked at each other, and then at the speaker. That swift glance was an interchange of tacit recognition that in him, or rather, from him, existed that singular atmosphere. The man himself was one of those hard, fleshless, mahogany individuals you can neither hurt nor tire. There was more than seriousness in his question, there was anxiety.

'Ye-es,' came the reply. 'I admit I have. I don't mean any of the ordinary bogeys of the were-wolf, bunyip type, but something more or less authentic. It was in the hinterland of French Cochinchina. Indeed, so convinced did I become that there was something in it that I went, under French protection, to look into the matter myself.'

'Well?'

'The terror was genuine enough, but that was all there was "to it." The creature only came out at night : no one had ever seen it ; and so forth, and so forth. So I came to the conclusion that it was a bogey after all. All the same—all the same,' he ended, 'I could not help feeling they were keeping something back, lying, in fact—that there was a real something after all.'

'Is that all you know ? Have you heard nothing more ?'

'Ye-es. Let me see. I did hear of some missionary chap going up that way on some such trail. I should like to know if he found out anything, but I have not heard of him since. By the way, his name was something like yours. Let me see, Cotton, was it ?'

'Yes. Cotton it was. He was my brother. The bogey killed him, and I saw it happen.' Then, looking rather pitifully round the room. 'I'll tell you fellows about it if you don't mind. I have never spoken of it before, and it may be a relief.'

The men saw the pain in his eyes and acquiesced. Nevertheless, there was not one who had far rather not hear the story, including the naturalist. Then Cotton commenced.

At first he spoke as one constrained, constrained by torture. In a short time, however, he had his emotion in hand and the story became less painful—less painful in the manner of telling, at least.

'My brother,' he began, 'was not exactly a missionary. He was a Mission Pioneer, something after the manner of Livingstone, a prospector whose job was to fossick out places where a Mission might be planted with some reasonable chance of development. Physically and intellectually he was splendidly equipped for the work—he was a perfect genius at picking up languages, and what was of most consequence, his whole heart was in the enterprise. Now, as these ventures took him into the wildest of wild parts, and as I am something of an explorer and big-game shot'—the hum of recognition from the room disconcerted him for a moment ; he checked, then stumbled on—'well, he had no difficulty in persuading me to accompany him.

'The East was his hunting-ground, especially Malaya. "Africa," he would say, "was well in hand, and China was opening up," and the upshot was that our last expedition found us poking about along the southern frontier of French Cochin China. There, in an evil hour, we heard of a tribe, or rather community, known as the Well-Meaning Ones.'

There was a grunt from the Bug-Hunter.

'Which means Fiends Incarnate,' he interjected.

'Exactly. Fools that we were not to have guessed as much from the start. Apart from the extreme unlikelihood of such a name being applicable to the folk thereabout, any schoolboy would have at once suggested the classical parallel, the Eumenides, the Well-Meaning Ones, the propitiatory euphemism for the Furies. Somehow the obvious escaped us, never so much as entered our minds, so much so that my brother joyously made a bee-line for the accursed place. To him its name suggested an ideal vedette for missionary outpost work. Moreover, there was any amount of mixed shooting about. You might put up a tiger one moment and a buffalo the next, and bag one after the other, provided neither got you first. This inducement appealed to both of us.

'The capital of this infernal tribe was a place called Boh San, a hill fortress, admirably fortified, with an abundant water supply, and a steep, natural *glacis* sloping down on three sides to the most pestilence-ridden forest that ever killed off Malay, let alone European. The fourth side, the north, was open and tolerably level, the weak spot in the defences—seemingly.

'Seemingly. It was a rugged plain, covered with great blocks under cover of which skirmishers could advance almost to the walls. Beyond, less than a mile distant, the plain ended in a steep escarpment, all rifted with ravines, and buttressed at the foot by masses of huge boulders, forming a labyrinth of caves—a natural fortress to the military eye more impregnable than Boh San itself. "A rare place for tiger," I thought to myself. Only no tigers were there, nor human beings either.

'For years the Bohsanese had ruled the countryside by terror, that terror which had earned them the title of the Well-Meaning Ones, coupled by judicious raids on any tribes that showed fight. Punishment always took the form of tribute, and tribute always took the form of human beings. What became of these was never known. It was certain that they were not made slaves. Rumour had it that they were sacrificed with horrid rites to some mysterious monster. Nevertheless, such was the fear inspired by the Bohsanese that envoys would go down, alone, with no escort, and select victims, unmolested.

'At length something happened: an envoy selected the daughter of a chief on her bridal day and met with a pointed refusal from her lover that went through his heart and stuck out under his shoulder-

blade, and the Malayan worm turned, and when the Malayan worm turns, treading on the tail of a Burmese cobra is relatively a safe and pleasurable pastime. Every Bohsanese at large was massacred out of hand and a confederacy was formed with the express object of mopping up the remainder.

'An expeditionary force was dispatched against the confederacy, and did not return, except piece-meal, literally piece-meal, and then it began to dawn on the Well-Meaning Bohsanese that the terror of their name was gone, and that their number was up, badly. In this strait the Arch-Fiend, i.e. the Arch-Priest, in Council remembered that they were under French protection, a situation they had not hitherto acknowledged, at any rate, not with enthusiasm. The difficulty was to get into touch with the French. This would seem easy enough as the fort was only invested on three sides, but the open side was the plain to the north, and over that neither the fear of the sword, starvation, nor torture, immediate or prospective, would send any solitary Bohsanese. At length, one misty morning, under cover of a false sortie to the south, twenty men broke away for the nearest French post.

'The nearest French post was regrettably sceptical and communicated with the Commandant who, as good or bad luck would have it, was tolerably near at hand with quite a strong fighting force, the activities of some bandits having demanded drastic attention. He was even more callous. Indeed, he expressed an opinion that it would be no bad thing if all the Bohsanese had their throats cut. Nevertheless, as in duty bound to Friendlies, he sent a *sous-officier* with two files of men back with the embassy—to report.

'Two days later four of the deputation, clothes torn, heads bandaged, covered with blood and dirt, staggered back, bearing with them the corpse of the *sous-officier*, foully mutilated. It is, of course, needless to say what had happened. First of all they had massacred the five Frenchmen and then returned to force the Commandant's hand. Their wounds were quite genuine, too, for the Malayan is nothing if not an artist. Their story was that they had been surprised by the enemy and cut down, and that they four alone had escaped out of the battle. They were nearer the truth than they knew. That was precisely what had happened to the sixteen survivors whilst they were engaged in putting finishing touches to the obsequies of the French soldiers. Few people can have been more gratified than those four Bohsanese when, on being marched back to the scene of the alleged ambush, each with the

muzzle of a rifle between his shoulders, they saw their late comrades lying as they had fallen, with the four soldiers in their midst.

'This decided the Commandant. He whipped up every rifle he could muster and, strengthened by a couple of machine-guns, marched hot-foot to Boh San and came on the besiegers in the very act of storming the fortress. There and then he "larned" them not to molest Well-Meaning natives under French protection, and the Bohsanese took care that the lesson should not be forgotten. Consequently on the occasion of our visit a few months later, no dog dared move his tongue against Boh San. This may seem all more or less irrelevant——'

'Not at all,' interposed the Bug-Hunter. 'I have been puzzling over two things. One, how the French came to let you go unescorted, as I heard your brother did. Two, how you talked so lightly about shooting. I went under guard of ten rifles and even then I simply dared not venture any distance into the jungle. I understand now.'

'Thanks, and you will understand too that you, under French protection in being, were as safe in Boh San as you are here, whereas we, unescorted, were absolutely at the mercy of the tribe. If we disappeared, we disappeared, and there were plenty of opportunities of disappearing without foul play.

'Truth to tell we had a very good time at first. Of course, we had agreed to conduct ourselves as foreigners should, that it was the worst possible form to interfere in any way with the religious or social customs of the land, and so forth. True it is that Kenelm, my brother, had set his mind on the reform of these some day—by other hands perhaps—but not yet, not yet, and to this resolution we honestly intended to adhere.

'Someone some time or other said or wrote somewhere that a strong man should be a master of circumstance. That is a characteristically idiotic remark that issues from the armchair of the pseudo-philosopher who has never been up against it. Leaving myself out, Kenelm was an exceptionally strong man, morally, intellectually, and physically. We got on quite all right with the Bohsanese and, what was remarkable, Kenelm was on excellent terms with the Arch-Priest, and so I am convinced we should have continued—but for circumstance. I must just switch off a bit to explain.

'The town or fortress of Boh San was simply a rough parallelogram with enormously thick walls of mud and rubble and a strong gate at the two narrow ends, the north and the south. There was

nothing out of the way about this. Similar primitive fortresses, differing in detail but on the same general principle, are to be found all the world over. The unusual features were the Temple and the defences of the north wall. The Temple was in the exact centre of Boh San, a rough parallelogram of sandstone, some sixty feet by forty, and perhaps twenty feet high. The shape of the town had obviously been modelled on that of this block. The sandstone itself had been excavated and worked out into various chambers accessible to the priests alone. The punishment for intrusion by a layman was death. On its flat top the ceremonials connected with the worship of the local god were celebrated in the presence of the people. The features of these celebrations were incantations, chants, fires, and what not, but not sacrifices. Sacrifices there were, as you shall hear, but they took place elsewhere. This local god was a malignant demon whose abode was reputed to be amongst the fissures and crags beyond the plain to the north. These crags were taboo. The god was taboo. To speak of it was taboo: the punishment was death. The whole subject was taboo of taboo, yet the whole community seemed tolerably acquainted with the existence and attributes of this pernicious deity. As a means of egress and ingress except on certain ceremonial occasions the northern gateway was scarcely used. It was opened every two hours during the night for the purpose of changing guard, the guard consisting of a single sentry. If the deity should happen to be out and about and catch him napping, the strength of the garrison would not be seriously depleted by one man missing, and the Bohsanese had made other provision against contingencies. All along the north wall at an elevation of some fifteen feet from the ground, fixed into the crude masonry, was a screen of horizontal bamboos. It would appear that the deity, not content with a stray sentinel or such other provision as the Bohsanese occasionally made, would now and then essay a domiciliary visitation. To frustrate such undesirable manifestations of interest the bamboo screen had been devised. The god would scale the wall as far as the bamboos, but when it came to swinging its weight on these, the strong, pliable shafts would give, with the result that it would slip off and return to the ground with considerable velocity. One or two experiences of this kind would cause it to give up its projected visit as a bad job and go home to its rifts and crags. Furthermore, in the event of an alarm, the guard of worshippers would turn out and line the wall with their great pronged spears, a kind of cross between a butcher's knife and



a pitchfork. The whole taboo was a farce, but there could be no doubt that the god was a very living and very perilous reality. Oddly enough, on being repulsed, it never sought ingress by the right or left where the walls were barren of defence. Once inside there would have been apparently nothing to check it, for the houses were merely bamboo huts and the open entrances of the Temple were guarded by nothing more solid than a barrier of superstition.

'Now it is, I take it, quite unnecessary to say that a personal interview with this malign deity was what Kenelm especially desired, and I was not one whit behind. That it was some ferocious natural freak—probably, judging from its habitat and from the nature of the bamboo defence, some monstrous baboon, I had no doubt, and in all my experience I had not, till then, met the animal that had a dog's chance against my rifle—and Kenelm could shoot, too. The Arch-Priest, however, would have none of it. I have said he and Kenelm were on excellent terms, and in some unaccountable phase of something approaching humanity, he strongly objected to sending my brother to his death—and death, he affirmed, was the only possible termination of such a venture. I have an idea, however, that he would not have objected to my going—not a little bit.

'The reason of his dislike for me I could not conjecture at the time. The explanation of the good understanding between him and Kenelm was not far to seek. The Arch-Priest was delighted to meet with a foreigner of the potent white race who could converse with him in his own tongue, and conceived also something akin to a liking for the stranger prince—Kenelm looked every inch a prince—who treated him, not as a dog as did the French, but as, at least, an equal: Kenelm never forgot to indicate his recognition of the Arch-Priest as Chief Magistrate of his brass-farthing state. Moreover the Priest, being an Oriental, simply loved being told stories. They are all that way. Take a group of silent, dignified Bedouin and start pitching yarns, and you will have them all round your knee like children in a nursery.

'Kenelm was an admirable *raconteur* and had at his finger ends that unailing fund of stories for all ages and all passions, the Old Testament. He fitted his stories to circumstance or circumstance to his stories. A master of circumstance and a master of art, he was trenching his way by the Scriptures to the dethronement and destruction of the demon god. A master of art and circumstance! He was, in fact, drawing up his death-warrant.



'We had been in Boh San a week and were on "stop as long as you like and come back as soon as you please" terms. Kenelm was by way of becoming a power in the state and I—I had not then fallen under the Arch-Priest's displeasure—not exactly a nonentity, thanks to my ability to shoot straighter than most. "Gun of Death" they called me, and ability to take life is a faculty that counts high with the Bohsanese. Then the sky began to darken. The first danger-signal was an invitation from the priesthood to view the Temple.

'Kenelm was delighted. I shied like a horse from a cobra. I acquit the Arch-Priest of any evil intent, but not the priesthood. Indeed, on reflection, it is quite certain the Arch-Priest must have repeated Kenelm's stories to his colleagues. He himself had listened with the innocent, unreasoning pleasure of a child with its nurse. Not so the priests. It is not less certain that unless Kenelm's pointed deductions were altogether missed, these narrations must have been to the Bohsanese Theological College simply rank blasphemy. In fact, I am pretty sure the suggestion did not emanate from the Arch-Priest. He was a masterly man and consequently unpopular. Kenelm had become his favourite, indeed the favourite of all Boh San, except the priesthood. Here, then, we have ready to hand a spring of envy, hatred and malice. Still, officially, the Arch-Priest was responsible for our admission, and the pontiff who introduced a foreign devil into the sanctuary would be no less guilty of sacrilege than the foreign devil and no less worthy of death.

'The Temple consisted of an outer corridor, an inner corridor, and the Shrine, which was, in fact, the centre of the block hollowed out. There was but one entrance, a narrow doorway, closely draped with a thin, evil-smelling curtain. It was lit by apertures in the roof which appeared to be covered with fine netting. Before entering we were bidden robe ourselves in priestly robes not less evil smelling than the door-curtain. We objected, but were assured they were desirable if not for our safety, for our convenience.

'The Shrine was nauseous. In the centre was a well of clean water, the only clean thing in the place; all else was damp and dirt and crawling life, which we could sense without at first seeing. As our eyes grew more accustomed to the light we made them out to be spiders, thousands of them.

'I know this and that about entomology, but such spiders I had never seen before nor since. They were about the size of

tarantulas, the spread of their legs would about touch the circumference of a saucer, but they were not tarantulas, nor like them. They more resembled overgrown specimens of the big, black, bloated farmhouse spider. It was to keep off these we had put on robes dressed with some mixture these loathsome insects abhorred. They were highly poisonous, the Arch-Priest told us, but their bite was not necessarily deadly.

'All round the walls were hideous representations of these creatures, enlarged in scale and rendered more repulsive by huge blobs of red eyes and faces of Malayan gods, grinning bestiality and cruelty. Kenelm touched my arm.

"There is danger," he whispered. "Let us be going."

'There was that in his voice that came near to shaking my nerve, not fear, no, nor alarm, but something akin to awe with a shadow of horror behind. It made me glad to go. At the doorway occurred a trivial happening. My foot slipped slightly on the slimy floor and I put my hand to the wall to steady myself. Something got on to my hand and seemed to cling to it. I took it to be one of the musty bits of spiders' web with which the walls were plastered, but on getting past the curtain into daylight, I saw it was one of those loathsome spiders, and sprawling on the back of my bare hand. Of course I did what anyone else would have done—jerked it off and set my foot on the beastly thing. Kenelm did not notice the incident. He was not noticing.

'He was not noticing. He was like a man partly dazed; I remember he was on the point of walking out of the Temple without doffing his malodorous protective garment, and that, on being checked by the Arch-Priest, his laugh, as he stammered out an apology of sorts, had nothing of laughter in it. I remember that the Arch-Priest regarded him curiously—with solicitude, and I have not forgotten the glance with which that unamiable Bohsanese favoured me. It was malevolence concentrated.

'I had other things to think about, however, than hostile priests. I was concerned for Kenelm. I had never seen him like that before, and wanted to get him alone. There was no difficulty about that. The Arch-Priest was no less anxious to be quit of us than we of him. As soon as we were by ourselves Kenelm looked at me questioningly.

"Did you not feel it?" he asked, after a long pause, and again there was that tinge of horror in his voice. Just for a moment an idea shaped itself that he might have seen the spider, but that I

dismissed as trivial, and I had noted that strangeness of tone in the Shrine itself. Nevertheless, all the time he was speaking that wretched insect kept crawling about, as it were, in my brain; yet his words were arresting enough.

"Did you not feel it?" he repeated. "The Presence. It was almost tangible. Yes, and the danger is real, real and physical, but the source, the source is spiritual. I have known for years that in the dark places of the earth they worship devils, but never have I set foot before in a home of Satan."

"I said nothing: there was nothing to say; moreover I had experienced none of the sensations that had so perturbed Kenelm. As for him, he did not seem to expect an answer. He just sat brooding, brooding, brooding, with his chin in his hand. Then he spoke again, very slowly.

"Yes. The danger is very near and I am the quarry. The evil is directed against me alone. Yes, in very truth, Boh San is a seat of Satan, a seat of Satan."

"Very well, then," I interposed, "if that's so, let's get out of it and quick, especially if there's danger about."

'Dear old Kenelm's face cleared on the words and he laughed genuinely.

"I can see you doing it, old boy. You're exactly the man to rat from duty because it chances to be dangerous, and exactly the sort to appreciate the man who would. Why, I believe you would disown me as a brother if I thought of such a thing. No," he became serious again, "face it out I will, and if I perish, I perish."

"No, you don't," thought I, "not if I can help it anyway. It's all very true about sticking things out to the death if you can do any good thereby—horrid, unpleasant, but it has to be done, but where there's no possible chance of doing any good it is sheer, rank folly." Those, gentlemen—here Cotton looked round the silent room—were my reflections, and I may say at once I have made few more foolish.'

There was no reply. Someone struck a match—he had been waiting to do so for fear of interrupting. Then Cotton resumed.

'Of course, I did not say anything of the kind to Kenelm. I just reminded him that Esther, the heroine of his words, did not perish but succeeded beyond expectation, and generally bucked him up. Finally I persuaded him to come for a moonlight stalk with me. I know of nothing better calculated to distract attention from everything but the matter in hand than a moonlight stalk in a

leopard country. There was no need for that, however; Kenelm did not so much as open his lips again on the subject that had so distressed him, and long before we started was his old cheery self again.

'We were back with the dawning and by that time, so far as I could judge, any unpleasantness that might have resulted from our visit to the Temple had cleared away. Certainly I concluded that, if looks count for anything, the Arch-Priest assuredly did not love me. On the other hand I was pretty sure my stock had gone up in Boh San generally. My venturing out on a moonlight stalk seemed to indicate that I was something of a superman. I learned from Kenelm, who was a good deal amused, that he found he had got none of the credit, as he was assumed to be insured against accident by the Gun of Death. As a matter of fact it was a perfectly mad thing to do, especially as the moon had barely passed her half, and no credit attached to either of us. I wish now, however, with all my heart—though, perhaps, I am wrong to do so—that if we were out for anything foolhardy, we had gone to see what was to be found on the north of the town.

'All went on much the same as before—much the same, not quite. For instance, I noticed that the Arch-Priest ceased to indulge in long *tête-à-têtes* with Kenelm. He was not less friendly, nor apparently less interested, but he always had another priest with him, and never the same two days running. This annoyed Kenelm a good deal. The object of the Arch-Priest was—to me quite evidently—not to bring new pupils to the feet of Gamaliel but to safeguard himself against any charge of heresy, and before long Kenelm, very unwillingly, began to come round to my way of thinking. Nevertheless, though disheartened, he did not despair. In any case he resolved to hang on until after the full moon which, he had gathered, was to be the occasion of some big religious festival, something especially holy. This annoyed me more than a good deal. I was convinced that the place was getting less and less healthy for us every day.

"Something particularly holy," I remember saying with considerable bitterness, "means something extra-specially damnable. All right. I'll stay on condition that you undertake not to do any Telemachus stunt and barge in to interfere with the racial customs."

"All right," replied Kenelm, with a quiet smile. "If you don't, I won't."

'It was the day before the ceremony. I had just finished getting

all my traps together, for I was determined to upstick and away at the earliest possible moment, even if it meant a moonlight flitting. There was a sinister atmosphere about Boh San that was telling on my nerves, and even Kenelm was beginning to feel a bit "edgy." By way of a little recreation we went off for a shoot. I had an ugly sensation that we were being watched, at any rate at the start. I am afraid that if I had spotted one of these watchers, I should have mistaken him for a wild beast and apologised to the authorities afterwards.

'We did not expect to get much. It was broad day and the country just at that particular part was fairly open. I had taken my stand on one side of a clump of trees and undergrowth and Kenelm was making a tour round it in the hope of putting up something. It was as still—as still as a sub-tropical noon can be, and you cannot have anything stiller.

'All at once I heard a scuffle, a woman's shriek, and Kenelm's voice calling me. I was off at speed. On the way a Bohsanese came staggering past. The blood was pouring down his face and one eye was nearly closed. Had I been anything but a fool, he would have got no further. Then I came on Kenelm.

'He was looking flushed and excited. At his feet, on her knees, was a Malay girl, fondling his right hand and holding it to her lips. He was contemplating the knuckles of his left fist which were badly cut.

'I did not stop to talk. I immediately connected up those damaged knuckles with the Bohsanese's damaged face and was off after him. Curiously enough I remember that something from Macaulay came into my head, something about Strafford, that the execution of an individual was justified if the safety of the State demanded it. Just then Kenelm and I constituted the State.

'Unfortunately, in my haste, I made a noise like a charge of cavalry, and the Bohsanese heard me and, at the first glimpse, bolted to covert. I had a snap at him but he got away. That shot did me a deal of harm—not that it would have made much odds in the long run, I fancy. Up till then it was supposed that it was impossible for me, the "Gun of Death," to miss, and I had missed, or rather—worse luck—I had not. The bullet had cut in through the flesh under the left armpit.

'I need not tell you what had happened. The girl, of course, was tribute, brought in by a Bohsanese, her hands tied behind her back, and her back stimulated with a ratan cane: it was all over

weals. Kenelm had come across the convoy and had intervened. The Bohsanese had drawn a knife and had run up against Kenelm's left.

'When I got back—I had spent some little time trying to get on the spoor of my quarry and failing—Kenelm was alone. He had got rid of the girl somehow. I did not bother about enquiring. We had quite enough on hand as it was.

"Safety first!" quoth I, as soon as Kenelm had finished.

"How many clips have you in your cartridge-belt?"

"Three. Same as you. Why?"

"Why? We're going to give Boh San and its festival a miss, that's all. It is not more than three days' march to the nearest French station, and two old stagers like ourselves can make that all right. Then we will come back under escort, good and strong, and recover our goods and chattels."

"And never shave again," interposed Kenelm. Then, in reply to my unspoken question: "I, for one, could never look myself in the face after bolting from a crowd of half-baked Shan-skallywags. Besides, I seem to remember when, a good many years ago, two men were examined for a good deed done to an impotent man, they did not shirk the issue."

"That was just like Kenelm. He put it up to you and there you were—up against it, hard.

"All the same," he continued reflectively, "there is no reason why—in fact, it would be far better, if you——"

"Oh, shut up," I said.

"Still I could not but regret having fired that shot, and still more that I had not got my man in the neck. Human life is sacred, squeaks the anæmic pacifist. So it is, I entirely agree, especially mine. At the same time it was borne in on me that the Arch-Priest might take my view, if this matter came before Boh San in Council—my view, with this difference, that human life was sacred, especially his.

"We did not get much sport that day. "Gun of Death" missed two sitters, one after another, which is a sufficient indication of the state of my nerves. We were not sorry to get back, and we were not sorry to find, that for all the special notice taken of us, we might never have been out of Boh San. At least Kenelm was not. I did not like the sign a little bit.

'I am not going to bother you with a description of the festival. All Boh San that drew sword turned out at moonrise and lined up

outside the northern wall, armed to the teeth. In the centre were the priests with a strong bodyguard in front and on either side, especially in front. Every tenth man carried a totally unnecessary torch—the plain, in the light of a full tropical moon, was bright as day. In the rear came some stalwarts from among the women and children. Kenelm and I were in the place of honour, on either side of the Arch-Priest. Then we marched northwards towards those rifted crags.

‘It was a question of, as at most religious festivals, favouring with one’s tongue, which is classical for keeping silence. Not that that made much difference, for in the clangour and clatter of drums, cymbals, and all kinds of music one would have had to shout to make oneself heard. Kenelm took advantage of an unexpected lull in the shindy to observe that these fellows had the wind up about something. My reply was :

“Quite. Have you your Browning handy?” when the Arch-Priest intervened with a quiet gesture of his arms across both our faces. We took the hint, but I noted with satisfaction that Kenelm had cleared his front pocket for action. We were both heeled in the matter of rifles, but it is easy to snatch a rifle, in which circumstances a Browning may come in, unexpected and useful.

‘Scarcely had this reflection formulated itself when a cord was dropped over my head, my arms were pinioned, my wrists held, and my rifle snatched. Kenelm was secured at the same moment and in the same way. So swiftly and silently was this accomplished that I doubt if the man in front or three files on either side were aware of it. Kenelm and I behaved exactly in the same way. Kenelm was smoking at the time and the loop missed his pipe. He kept on smoking.

‘About the length of a cricket-pitch from the base of the crags we halted, and the Arch-Priest, mounting on a large, flat-topped boulder—evidently a ceremonial rostrum, carved as it was with quaint scrolls—addressed all Boh San. Even at that moment I could not help but notice the ludicrous condition of funk the man was in ; one eye was over his shoulder towards the rocks at least as often as on the crowd, and his limbs were, well, like a sprinter’s at scratch, ready to get off at once and make the maximum distance in the minimum time. I did not notice these things for long. It became painfully clear that I was the centre of interest and he the counsel for the prosecution.



'The counts against me were that I had forced him, the Arch-Priest, at the muzzle of the "gun of death," to take me into the sanctuary; that I had slain one of the sacred creatures, the children of the god, when there; that I had interfered with a Bohsan envoy on his lawful occasions, brutally maltreated him, and finally endeavoured to shoot him, but the god had turned the "gun of death" aside. The penalty was—he raised his hands and waited, and from the whole assembly rolled back the word "Death."

'Even at that moment I could not help appreciating the old villain's anxiety that Kenelm should escape scot-free. Kenelm was less appreciative. He shouted that the man lied, that it was he who had laid violent hands on the envoy and that it was at the Arch-Priest's express invitation that I, very unwillingly, had entered the Temple.

'This last was awkward. The pontiff was an autocrat, a master of men, and as little loved of his colleagues as I of him. Yet he was a master of circumstance, too. Instead of rebutting the charge he pointed to the moon.

"The time of sacrifice is at hand," he cried. "If it pass, the wrath of the god will be upon us. If this man come back unscathed, then we shall know they are both of the gods. If not, this man," pointing to Kenelm, "shall be reserved for the next festival."

'That was a month distant, the artful, kindly old devil. I recognised that at once. So, too, did others.

"Ay, to-morrow night. The Queen of Heaven" (a very strange phrase that) "will still be in her glory," came the reply, and the Arch-Priest could only bow his head.

'Four men led me to the crags. I did not struggle. There was no use, and I might want all my energy when the need came. A fifth carried my "gun of death" and cartridge-belt before me, abusing and insulting them as if they were living things. Up the crags they took me by steps cut in the live rock, and stopped at the edge of a deep fissure, slanting inwards at an angle of about forty-five degrees. My gun and cartridge-belt were left at the foot of the staircase, and Number Five led the way, with his great pronged spear at the charge. It was shaking like a reed in the wind. To say I was the coolest of the six may, perhaps, not be saying much, but I was. My guards had but one thought—obsession, rather, and that was to be off. Down that fissure I had to go and smart, or be pitchforked down.

'I did find time to wave my hand to Kenelm. I could see him

smile a farewell in the moonlight, and then—then he suddenly collapsed. It was just a glimpse. A sharp prod from the butt of a spear admonished me that the blade would come next.

'Some fifty feet down, the cleft ended in a kind of corridor. It was perhaps sixty feet long by about the same height, but the containing walls were not more than twenty feet apart at most. There were fissures on either side, of course, and at least one practicable chimney. The floor was covered with great shattered fragments, some obviously from a recent rock-fall. Along the western edge I could see against the sky the silhouettes of crags that maintained a precarious balance on the very verge.

'All these details were distinct: the rift faced due south and the full moon was at her zenith. At the end of the corridor was an ebony archway, and beyond that, blackness.

'I scrambled towards it. I did not intend to explore it. My plan was to remain a certain time in the corridor, concealed as well as possible, in case some lurking danger should come my way, and then slip out in the darkness by the way I had entered. Still, it was possible that danger might lurk beyond the archway.

'As I got close, I could make out it was the entrance to a tunnel tilting down into the bowels of the mountain. It was pitch dark beyond and nothing was to be gained by going further—when I thought I heard something stirring. I turned and peered into the blackness.

'At first I thought it was a ray of moonlight falling on some dull crystals. Then I saw that they were eyes, eyes grouped together, eight of them, dull, expressionless, hateful, and behind, a dim, shapeless bulk. It was coming towards me and I knew it was Death.

'I slipped back into the corridor and cast about for a means of escape, and all the time knew it to be vain. Long before I could have struggled out of reach up the chimney the creature would be on me. Long before I could have reached the rocks I had descended I should be overtaken, and, in any case, beyond these were the Bohsanese.

'Upon the realisation an extraordinary clamour broke out and quick on it the spit, spit, spit of Kenelm's automatic. I can only conjecture that his faint was a ruse: I shall never know, here, anyway. Next minute his figure sprang into view against the sky at the top of the fissure. Almost simultaneously a backward glance showed that great menacing form issuing from the archway (even

at that moment I noted that those evil eyes had disappeared). Kenelm saw it too.

"Lie down, old man," he shouted, and a bullet whistled down the corridor, and then. . . . Then I was brushed aside like a pebble as the monster sprang past me.

'I think Kenelm had time to fire again—in any case he might as well have used a squirt, poor fellow, and it was all over. I should like to think,' he looked round the room piteously, 'he did not suffer. It was so quick.'

There was a sympathetic silence. No one had anything to say and did the right thing. After a pause Cotton resumed :

'What actually occurred I cannot tell. I was dashed aside, flung down, and half stunned, and, before I could get a grip of things, the monster was back, searching for me. I had been flung into the base of the chimney, on my back, face uppermost, that is, but I had sense enough to lie still. Then something light fell on my cheek, then more. I just unclosed my lids and could see above me the shapeless bulk of the creature reared up against the wall, searching and scraping at the sides of the chimney with a limb that looked something like a jointed Turk's head broom. Then it dropped down again and commenced raking about the floor of the corridor. It never touched me, though it missed me once and again by inches. Then it swung itself up to the skyline and I could see what it was. It was a spider, like those in the Temple, only quite ten times as large.'

'I beg your pardon,' began the Bug-Hunter. 'Forgive me for interrupting—'

The entire room turned on him in horror. Was the man going to have the unutterably execrable taste to insist on his no-giant argument at such a time? The Bug-Hunter continued, quite unmoved.

'Could you tell me approximately about the size?'

'Yes.' Cotton's voice showed neither hesitation nor resentment. 'The body was about the size of one of those beer-casks you see on drays. The spread of the legs was perhaps twelve feet.'

'Thanks. Then I think I may assure you that your brother did not suffer at all. The ordinary spider is quite poisonous enough, but its mandibles are almost microscopic. That monster's must have been the size of a tiger's holders and surcharged with venom equal to that of a hundred cobras. A touch would have been instant death. Instant and painless.' Then, reflectively, 'It must

have had your unfort—your noble brother in full sight whilst you, so long as you remained prone, were invisible.'

'Why?' asked someone.

'A spider's eyes are on the top of its head, to watch out against its winged enemies. Any object on a level with or below its head is quite out of sight.'

'And didn't the brute know it?' exclaimed Cotton. He spoke almost with the lightness of a man from whom some heavy burden has been lifted. 'It is my conviction, and I think you will all agree with me by and by, that the creature was actually devil-possessed. It was perfectly conscious of its disability. No sooner had it escalated the containing wall than it swung itself head downwards and searched, literally searched the corridor with those dreadful, unchanging eyes of it; yet instantly on recognition of the nature of the monster I had slipped under cover of a shattered boulder and lay invisible. Why? I cannot explain. Instinct, perhaps. I certainly never anticipated such a move on the part of the spider.'

'Its next actions puzzled me completely. It dropped down to the upper exit of the corridor and for a moment I feared it was going to recommence its hunt. But no! It started fussing up and down and to and fro across the rocks and then scurried across the top and went through similar antics at the chasm end. The moon was still shining almost directly into the fissure, which may give some idea of the swiftness of these happenings, and it seemed to me the light was a little duller than before, just a little, screened as it were. I did not dare to go and examine, at any rate not for a time. After a while the monster ceased its gymnastics and took post above me on the edge of the ravine, its ugly head clearly defined against the dark sky. Then, knowing that I could not be seen from above, I crawled towards the opening.

'The infernal brute—I have said it was devil-possessed—had webbed me in. Knowing I was still in the corridor, it had spun a web over both exits so that I could not attempt to escape without giving it instant notice, and that, too, of the exact spot at which the attempt was being made. Now that, I submit, was beyond the intelligence of any spider.

'To say I was not frightened would be to lie. I was sick with fear, but I did not despair. For a moment I was chilled, chilled to shivering. Then a thought sent my blood to fever heat. Outside, in the fissure, my dearest brother was lying dead and, besides, I had a little score of my own to settle with the Bohsanese. Escape I must.

'How? The solution lay literally to my hand. The floor of the corridor was littered not only with boulders but with chips of stone of all sizes. I picked up a pebble and threw it at the moonlit web.

'The result was what I anticipated. The spider was there in a flash. There was something hideously alert in its action and poise. I did not stop to reflect on that. I picked up another stone and threw it at the other web.

'Back went the spider faster even than it had come. We are strangely constructed creatures. Within half an hour I had steeled my courage to face some unknown ordeal, been heart-broken with grief, overwhelmed with fear, and now I found myself actually chuckling at the thought of the exercise I was giving that brute.

'It would not do to keep up the game too long. It might try some other device and out-general me at the last. I felt out a flat fragment of rock, thin as a bit of slate and sharp almost as a knife, and laid it ready; then, picking up the biggest stone I could handle, I hurled it through the lower web and through the archway leading to the creature's lair.

'I do not know whether spiders have any sense of hearing, but I do know that that spider was off and out of sight down that archway like a flash of black lightning, and I know, too, that with a bound and two slashes I was through the web, up the fissure, down the steps, and flat amongst the blackest of black shadows of the boulders on the plain in almost as little time as it takes to tell of it, and not a moment too soon.

'Now I have said that all these happenings took place within half an hour. All Boh San had come out in procession to see the sacrifice, not headed by the priests, and all Boh San had, in due course, returned to the fortress headed by the priests. Nevertheless not one single item of the assembly had lingered on the return journey.

'Still processions at best are slow, clumsy things. At the expiration of half an hour the priests had reached the Temple and had lit the five ceremonial fires, one at each corner of the roof and the other in the centre. Not all Boh San by any means, however, was within the walls. The gate, the northern gate, was still open for the passage of the leisurely votaries. It was just about at that time that the deity of Boh San left its shrine amongst the rocks. The gate, the northern gate, was still wide open.

'It did not pause to look for me. I suppose it caught sight of

the fires and they attracted it, or it scented prey. Anyhow, it was away across the plain in gigantic, ungainly bounds at a speed that would have left a gazelle standing still.

'Then across the moonlit stillness came a shriek such as I have never heard before and hope never to hear again, and then a most dreadful wail of despair. At that short distance, less than a mile in a direct line, lit up as they were by the red glare of the fires, I could see much of the details, the frantic, surging mob, jammed and crushed in the open gateway, the white-clothed priests, looking black against the flames, rigid one moment, then scattering, some desperately hurling brands from the fires at something that immediately afterwards loomed huge on the Temple roof. Then from below a tongue of flame shot up, then another. I did not require to look again to realise what had happened. Some of those flaming brands had fallen among the bamboo houses. Boh San was on fire.

'Within was a raging furnace with a raging devil. Without were the night and the jungle, and thither all who could fled for safety (it is remarkable that even at that crisis not one ventured on to the northern plain). Safety! The jungle tribes had seen the conflagration and had gathered like vultures round a stricken quarry. I think the Bohsanese who perished in the burning fortress were the fortunate.

'I did not linger. I had a duty to perform. I picked up my rifle and cartridge-belt and went to look for Kenelm. He was lying peacefully, his face serene as a saint's, and quite undisfigured. Yes, I am sure his death was instantaneous and painless. I laid him in a cleft in the rock and covered him with stones till I could come and find him more fitting sepulchre. Yet all the time I kept an eye in the direction of Boh San. Before I had finished I could descry a dark, bloated form coming slowly across the plain.

'I had laid my plans for such an event. I slipped away up the hill-side and took post behind those toppling crags at the edge of the corridor. There at least was safe concealment, though that was not the first thought in my mind.

'I found myself panting. I must have hastened, but there had been no need. The monster was closer by then—not much, but close enough to see that it was moving not only slowly but painfully. I make no doubt it had been badly scorched in the burning town. It would have been right fitting had it been consumed there amongst its own accursed altars.

'I had not intended to use my rifle. It was an Express, not a



poor, spitfire Browning, all that Kenelm had had, but now the temptation to lay out that foul demon plain for all men to see was strong. I rested my rifle on a rock and fired. The bullet went a fraction too high and struck the body. Probably it went straight through, causing no more pain than a pinch. The second got the monster fairly in the head. It staggered, then came on at increased speed. On reflection my belief is that it was so sorely hurt by fire and bullet that its one aim was to escape to its own horrid abode. I did not think so then. A creature of such vitality I might not be able to stop at all. I fired no more.

'I could hear it dragging itself up the rocks, and as it topped the edge of the fissure I caught sight of its eyes. They were dull. All the baleful light had gone out of them. I heard it, I even dared to watch it, as it scrambled down.

'One of those great balanced boulders I had noted before. So precariously was it poised that it had moved when the spider had brushed against it in one of its rushes to and fro from web to web, and I had shrunk into a fissure in the wall lest haply it should crash down. By this I waited till the monster was beneath me, then pushed with all my might.

'There was a scrunch below and I knew I had not missed. I knew, too, there was no more to be done, yet I sent down boulder on boulder till the perspiration poured from me. Then, bone weary, I struck out for the nearest French post.'

There was a long silence when Cotton concluded. Men would have wished to have asked a score of questions, but all felt that such would have been unseemly. At length the Professor spoke :

'It is, at least, a consolation for you to think that your brother, if he has any knowledge of what happens here, must be satisfied.'

'Yes,' replied Cotton. 'I think he is satisfied. At Boh San, the Seat of Satan, now stands a Medical Mission. At the Cotton Memorial Hospital, so far as human skill may, the sick are healed, the lame walk, the blind receive their sight, and, what is nearest to dear old Kenelm's soul, the Gospel is preached. Yes, I think he is satisfied.'

CLAUDE E. BENSON.



### IN THE HEART OF AUSTRALIA.

THE world has now but few unknown waste places into which the adventurer may stumble and discover something new or of value. The ice-bound Arctics and Antarcotics are not yet fit for human habitation and their hidden wealth must remain hidden until the earth's axis again changes. Ancient civilisations existed throughout what is now known as the Sahara desert, and the vast plateaus of Asia were probably the scenes in which our first ancestors lived, moved and had their being. New Guinea, Borneo, and other large islands of the south may still conceal possibilities, and there may be potentialities in the dense forests of central South America as yet undreamt of.

But *now*, in the ending of the first quarter of the Twentieth Century, A.D., there is still a part of the earth's surface offering inducement and promise to the explorer, prospector, fortune-seeker, and adventurer. This is the 'Never Never Land' of Australia. The great heart of Australia is as yet comparatively unknown, but whether it is the oldest or the newest tract of dry land in the world is still a question upon which the world's most famous geologists disagree. The writer is not competent to give much elucidation on this point, but he can say, with a knowledge derived from personal experience in the vast Australian interior, that its waterless sandy domain conceals more surprises and yields more chances for the adventure-loving fortune-seeker than any other part of the world he knows, and he does not write without knowing most latitudes and all meridians.

Australians love their country intensely and, perhaps, are even more patriotic than the people of the countries which gave them their ancestors, but they live mostly in the coast-fringe cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth and, while in thought, feeling and culture they are very much like the citizens of London or New York, to them the far interior is but a dreamland of mystery and imagination—of wool and shadeless mulga scrub—of gold and silver and precious gems. And this dream is wonderfully correct, though incomplete. Away from the great towns along the coast, Australia is a land of upside down. The trees indigenous to the country are all hollow and their bark grows inside. Native fruits carry their stones outside. Heavy ironstone nodules litter

the surface of the interior desert and, although frequently covered with sand after a sandstorm, always work their way back to the surface again. They seem to be immune from the law of gravitation and are thought by some people to be meteorites. The chief rivers of Australia have their sources in the mountain ranges near the sea, but they flow inland and only reach the ocean, if they ever do, after a course of many hundreds of miles, whereas twenty to thirty miles would be their lengths if they took the seemingly obvious routes. It does not appear to be generally known that from its source to the sea the waterway known by various names, but chiefly as the Darling and the Murray (like the Mississippi and the Missouri) is one of the longest rivers in the world. The sources of the Darling are in Queensland, quite near the eastern coast, but they all flow inland until they unite in the main stream above Bourke. Thence, the Darling flows sluggishly between banks—except when rain falls in the far north—through the back blocks of New South Wales, forming oases in the desert which to the wanderer are pleasant resting places—Wilcannia and Wentworth are examples which can never be forgotten by anyone—until, after joining the Murray, it enters the sea in South Australia.

But the glamour of the Darling and the mysterious regions beyond, cannot be imparted in written words by one man to another. In the far back blocks the influence of some other world seems to exist; men think differently, but only the stranger realises that fact, and soon he, too, becomes enthralled by the subtle spell, and ceases to see anything unusual in the thoughts and doings of his fellows. While he retains his sanity, however, the intruder can perceive that the people who live in the great 'Never Never Land' are in keeping with their environment. They, too, are upside down. Great events to them are of little importance, but they magnify the trivialities of life to a grotesque extent. They—and the stranger, after a time, too—believe in the occult, and the devils, demons, and other characters of the aborigines' imagination become real to them. Once beyond the Darling's western bank, or across the far back streams of Queensland, one is in the heart of this strange country, and then, only the man of strong mind and with a definite object in view can hope to preserve his mentality. Many have reasons for being far out on the great central plains, which extend through Queensland and New South Wales right into the dead heart of Australia. Among those are prospectors, kangaroo or emu hunters, opal seekers, and fossil collectors; and

there are also the aborigines of the country, though they are gradually becoming fewer and soon their corroborrees will be but memories of the past.

But, without unnecessary explanation, let the writer and his comrades ride into this half-dreamland in east central Australia—as they actually did recently—and tell of an experience there which will serve to illustrate the foregoing.

Mac, Big Sam, and I had started to ride from a mining town in the north with the idea of crossing, eventually, to Adelaide in the south, but also with the intention of passing through the far back opal country of Queensland and investigating the truth of some reports of marvellous finds of other gems, *en route*. One night we were camped in the bed of a watercourse which, doubtless, sometimes carried surface water, but which now afforded it only by the medium of a soakage hole. Our horses fed peacefully near on the vegetation which found life under the sun-sheltering branches of the wild fig trees on the creek's banks. Their bells tinkled pleasantly on the clear air and the stars shone overhead in full glory. We were far from any known camps of opal seekers, and, as far as we knew, were alone on the great central plains except for any wandering aborigines. But for some inexplicable reason the environment was eerie and the brilliant light of the moon seemed actually to have a bluish tinge.

'I don't wonder that white men out here in time come to believe the niggers' stories of bunyips, bilya-bhacans, and other devils,' Big Sam observed as we sat down to dine on the big scrub turkey we had cooked in the ashes of our fire. 'Just listen to those kookaburras in the trees. A man out here alone might soon believe that they were reincarnations of the evil spirits the natives talk about.'

'The devils of the aborigines' belief never die,' said Mac, 'but I feel I should like to try the effect of my Winchester upon that family of kookaburras aloft. I wonder how many hundreds of miles we are from the nearest white man?'

'This turkey is good,' I put in, 'and I saw lots of squatter pigeons and fat parrots just at sundown.'

'Maybe they were ghosts, too,' said Sam. 'Hullo! what was that?— Something spoke!—'

Sam seized his rifle and gazed up into the overhanging branches. Mac and I were certainly surprised, for something *had* spoken. We

listened, rifles in hand. Our nerves had suddenly got the better of us.

'Hullo!' a voice sounded from somewhere. 'We're white men.'

'Come on,' Mac shouted in reply, 'we were white skinned ourselves originally; and we've got a turkey.'

A minute later two men climbed down the creek embankment and stood beside us. They were both splendid specimens of manhood and nearly as unkempt as ourselves. One was very tall and his cheery mobile face suggested that he was an optimist. The other was not so tall, but his wiry frame brought to mind a strip of finely tempered steel. He seemed very nervous. Both were dressed as we were in shirt and belted trousers.

'It's a fine night,' the second man remarked casually, opening the conversation.

We showed no surprise but agreed with the assertion, and Mac asked seriously if the speaker didn't think it might rain or snow before morning. Our visitors did not quite grasp the subtlety of Mac's humour, but in course of sharing the turkey informed us that their names were Long Tom and Sydney Charlie, and that they were out so far in the 'Never Never' in search of pidcherie, that mysterious drug known only to the aborigines of the Australian interior, which has the effect of rendering them insensible to pain.

'We can get almost any price for the stuff,' Long Tom said, smiling strangely, 'but we can't find out what it is, or whether it grows or is given to the niggers by their ancestors' ghosts. We've got some, though, and expect to get more after a big corroborree going to be held near here is over.'

'We're only opal hunters,' I told them. 'We've heard of pidcherie, of course, but we don't believe all that is said about its powers.'

'Well, you'll find plenty of opal everywhere around you,' Long Tom replied, with a seraphic smile that seemed to be a feature of his, 'but you didn't need to come out as far as this for opal. There are tons of rubies and other gems, though, in a deposit round some native wells about half a day's ride west from here. We always load up with them when we take a spell in near the towns. You'll excuse me doing all the talking? Sydney Charlie never speaks much when he has got anything on his mind. I reckon he's been too long beyond the Barcoo.'

'What has he on his mind at present?' Big Sam inquired. 'There can't be anything to worry a man out here?'

'Oh, isn't there? What about the bunyip in the waterhole just a few hundred yards down this creek? We're camped there,' smiled Long Tom, but somehow the smile seemed incongruous. 'We're mighty glad to see you, I can tell you. We came along when we saw your camp fire and heard your horses' bells. Charlie thinks, too, that the aborigines have got us marked out as some kind of sacrifice. He saw a ring of footprints round our camp last night.' Again the smile expanded but we could not see any reason for it.

'I think, boys, we've taken the wrong track to Adelaide,' Mac put in, in mock alarm. 'I've got one or two things to do before I pass out, and every one knows that the sight of the bunyip means death. I don't like those footprint rings, either; we all know what they mean.'

'Jacky Jacky told us the natives always put three rings round you before they spear you, if you are sleeping,' spoke Sydney Charlie for the first time since his comment on the night.

'Who is Jacky Jacky?' I asked suspiciously. I had known a notorious sophisticated native who bore that name.

'Jacky Jacky is a police-trained native and the best black tracker in Australia,' Long Tom began after seeing that his mate was not disposed to speak further; 'he has more brains than any white man I know, can play cricket, lie like a member of Parliament, steal like a bower bird, and cheat old Jimmy Squarefoot at cards. He's a bosker all right. We employed him to come with us in at railhead, somewhere, and it's on him we depend for getting the pidcherie.'

'He must be a marvel for a nigger,' commented Mac, but he knew as well as Sam and I that some half-civilised natives were able to add all the cunning of their race to the knowledge they gained from the white man.

'Look here, boys,' suddenly broke in Sydney Charlie, 'I've got the nerves badly, and Long Tom's eternal grin makes me mad. I must be doing something. I don't want to go back to camp to sleep and maybe find another ring of footprints round us in the morning—come out over the open country for half a mile and Tom and I will show you opal which will blind you, even in the moonlight.'

'Charlie wants away from the creek,' explained Long Tom sympathetically, but smiling all over his face. 'He'll see the bunyip sure, even if we aren't ringed off——' About this time we began to understand that Long Tom's smile was a nervous affliction

and that he was really as terrified as Charlie. We erected our mosquito nets over our saddles, foodstuffs and private belongings, and walked out over the creek bank with our two friends. It was more pleasant working by night than in the scorching heat of the day, and in any case the sunlight of the morrow would dispel the awful feeling of unknown danger and we could then sleep in safety. We had not yet caught the influence of the place, but we knew it was infectious. We carried our rifles and some tools with us, and in about ten minutes saw a slight depression in the desert sand in front of us. The surface of this hollow glistened like coloured frost in the strange moonlight, because of a covering of salt crystals. Evidently we were looking at the dry bed of an ancient lake.

But we thought we had at length fallen under the spell of the spirits when we reached the edge of the basin. From our feet, receding far out over the sparkling sea of salt, swept wave after wave of vari-coloured fire. Fascinated, we stood and watched the eternally changing undulations of flame in ceaseless motion as if blown by a zephyr breeze; but there was not the faintest breath of air in that silent land. The parrots and other denizens of the trees back on the creek had gone to sleep and we fancied we could even hear the stars moving. Then, suddenly, an unearthly and prolonged wailing sound shattered the stillness of night, and we five white men shook with a feeling of dread. The sound was not that of any creature we knew. Sydney Charlie and Long Tom were nervous wrecks, but we still fought for our sanity. Long Tom fairly shrieked with apparent merriment.

'That's only some blackfellow swinging a ghingi-ghingi,' broke in Mac abruptly. 'Surely we've all heard that sound before? Let's get into the middle of this opal sea.'

Mac strode into the shimmering mass of salt as he spoke and we all did likewise. The crystals broke into powder under our feet and the cheating wave-movement ceased where we trod. We were now looking down at innumerable pin-points of fire, resembling very much the phosphorescent water round a ship's hull as it cleaves through tropical oceans. We lifted some of the powder in our hands and the colour flashes died away; they came again into view, however, when we lit a match, and soon, where we had trodden down the salt, nothing was visible except under matchlight.

We had now recovered from the idea that we were under some hallucination. We had seen streaks of surface opal before, although never in such profusion; nor had we imagined that opal would scintillate in moonlight. But the salt explained everything.



The surface of the lake bed was studded with minute points of opal which probably would always be visible in sunlight, but the salt crystals had magnified and reflected each pin-point so much that the quivering moonlight had brought about the wave effect we were still witnessing beyond the trodden limits. We forgot our feeling of depression and, clearing away the inch-thick salt crust, dug into the baked clay underneath which held the opal. It was surely the most marvellous formation of hydrous silica man had ever seen. How it had come to exist we did not understand, for it is generally accepted now, that both fire and water play the chief parts in nature's laboratory in forming opal, and there were no signs anywhere indicative of any active agency.

'This is funny, boys,' exclaimed Big Sam after a short space of silence, during which each man was collecting every solid particle of anything that flashed, 'I've found a shell and it's simply living.' He scraped away the hard mud-casing round an object in his hands and disclosed a perfect shell of exquisite opal.

'That's worth fifty pounds if it's worth a penny,' Long Tom commented, clearing away the perspiration from his face with his shirt sleeves. 'Opal shells fetch almost any price.' The smile had gone, but a self-reliant expression had taken its place.

'I've got either a double-edged comb or a fish's skeleton,' cried Sydney Charlie, holding up a piece of clay-covered something which sparkled like a cut diamond where a small piece had been broken. He proceeded to scrape off the silica, but Mac rescued the thing in time. 'That's maybe been a fish a million or more years ago,' Mac said. 'Don't risk breaking it; a museum is where those bones should rest.' (It is in a museum now.)

'Maybe it knew the bunyip, then,' mused Charlie; 'the bunyip lives for ever——'

'It won't continue to drag out a miserable earthly existence if I can get my rifle sights on him,' Mac grunted. 'What's he like?'

'My! he's not like anything and he isn't a he—No man can tell what it's like, because the man who sees it dies. Jacky Jacky says the fellow in the hole near our camp has been there for ever——'

'I'd advise you to get rid of Jacky Jacky,' I put in. 'Some of those ex-police trackers are almost devils themselves.' I still had the idea that I knew Jacky Jacky. The native I had known bearing that name was a blood maniac of extraordinary mental powers, who would be shot at sight by any man in the North without compunction. Of course he had cunning enough to change his name, but that is just what an Australian aboriginal will not do.



He loves to boast of his past exploits during periodical returns to his tribe. By some mysterious means not understood by white men the natives in the most remote parts get a surprising knowledge of everything that happens throughout the entire country, especially the doings of any of their own people, and the name of the hero is the only proof of his identity.

Again we worked in silence, broken only as each man found something to show his fellows. We heard the awful shriek of the ghingi-ghingi at frequent intervals, but as the sound produced by that instrument carries very far, especially on the desert, and is deceptive, we could not determine where it came from. When the stars began to gleam red in the sky, heralding the approach of the sun, we had dug out several pounds' weight of opal shells, opalised fish bones, and wood fossils transformed into opal by some magical metamorphosis. And Mac had gone far to solve the mystery of their occurrence, before a scientific society at any rate. He had sunk deep in preference to excavating over a large area and had bottomed his hole eighteen inches down on a hard bed of ironstone. Mac was no mean scientist himself, and both Sam and I were at least known on the subscription lists of several more or less learned organisations. We were interested and evidently showed that fact.

'What's wrong, mates?' Long Tom asked as we all packed up our collections in our shirts. I feared he was going to smile, but he did not.

'We've got some idea of how this place became opalised,' explained Mac. 'A volcanic eruption happened here a long time ago. This was a sea or a lake and everything was volatilised in the heat, and cooled back into opal. It's a pity you neglected science in your studies, Tom; it would tell you how evanescent human life is, what paltry objects we mortals are—and maybe, the winner of the Melbourne Cup.'

'Wonderful!' ejaculated Sydney Charlie, who was now quite cheerful because of companionship. 'Could it tell if that new heavyweight fighter down in Melbourne or somewhere will knock out Dempsey?' Charlie was certainly interested.

'Science doesn't like being made a fool of, Charlie; common sense should tell you that the American fellow will remain the world's best knocker-out until—until——' Mac expanded his massive naked chest, struck the empty air with his fists, and generally did his best to look pugilistic. The sight was funny. Our two friends were greatly impressed; they took Mac seriously, but Sam and I laughed.

'Dempsey will need all his science when you meet him, Mac,' Sam said. 'But you've got a lot of wrongs to right before we put up your tombstone.'

We were now walking towards the creek, on the bank of which we could see our horses feeding contentedly. The sun was still below the edge of the eastern desert, but its projected rays were already lighting up a range of hills we had not previously seen.

'Our camp is just beside that big eucalyptus tree,' said Long Tom. 'Come along and have breakfast with us as soon as you can collect your own feeding tools; I don't think I'll laugh.'

We accepted the invitation and headed for our own camp, Tom and Charlie diverging to theirs. The sun shot up as we descended the bank, and the first things we saw in its dazzling light were three spears sticking through our three mosquito nets. We glanced at each other without speaking for a moment, then walked over and looked through the nets. The spears had stuck in the ground inside and nothing had been touched. Silently we all calculated where the spears had been thrown from, pulled them out and examined them. They were ferociously barbed gidgya wood spears and therefore poisonous in themselves.

'Rather odd visiting-cards?' I ventured, laying down the one that had been meant for me. 'I don't like them.'

'It's the manner in which they were left I don't care about,' said Sam. 'Some people are very abrupt in their social manners.'

'Well, according to the laws of etiquette, we'll have to return the call, boys.' Mac's voice rang hard.

'Have you observed that each of those spears belonged to the same man and were thrown by one man?' I asked, and my companions nodded. They could read the symbols on the spear shafts as well as I could and the rest was easy of deduction. We replaced the spears in the holes they had made and went off to see how our friends were faring. We found them in a state of collapse. Sydney Charlie pointed to two distinct rings of footprints around their blankets. I studied them carefully. Long Tom was laughing.

'We've got our call, mates,' groaned Charlie, 'and the third ring will mean the end of us. I thought at first that Long Tom had made the first ring to frighten me—'

'And I thought Charlie had made it himself in his sleep,' smiled Tom. 'But none of us were here last night, as you know—and just look at the *two* rings.'

'Well, you needn't wait for the third ring,' Big Sam drawled.

'Hurry up with some breakfast and ride towards the rising sun. You can be far away to-night.'

'But we're waiting for Jacky Jacky to roll along with all the pidcherie he could get,' wailed Charlie.

'Pidcherie may prevent you feeling pain,' said Mac, 'but it won't keep off poisoned spears.'

'But we don't understand the niggers wanting to kill us,' persisted Charlie. 'They all know us, and they're not bad fellows.'

'Their ideas of things are different from ours,' I replied, and told of our experience. 'We are going to get an explanation,' I added, 'so if you tell us where the rubies and other stones are, we'll perhaps get some of them after we come to an understanding with the natives.'

'You make me feel a man again, mate,' exclaimed Charlie, and Long Tom ceased smiling and looked grateful. 'We'll get in our horses and *take* you to the native wells where the rubies and other stones have boiled over from where the bunyip lives when he's not in this hole here.'

For the first time we looked at the pool of deep water near us in which all sorts of birds, reptiles, kangaroos, emus, and other creatures were evidently enjoying themselves. The trees grew right over the creek, around the dark hole, and there were signs that it was of subterranean origin, but it was shallow at the edges where it overflowed.

'It's got no bottom,' said Long Tom. 'And you can find lots of coloured stones we don't know, but like those we'll take you to see, anywhere near it . . .'

Early that afternoon we were on the slope of the ridge we had seen at sunrise. We had left our pack-horses behind, and most of our belongings. The hill seemed to be composed entirely of ironstone and was absolutely bare of vegetation. Dotted over the region near the summit were many irregular holes of various sizes, filled with water, which bubbled at times as if some gas were breaking through from underneath. Around the mouths of each were depositions of small pebbles, bound in a sort of ironstone cement or conglomeration, and on breaking into this mass anywhere with a pick, dull fragments of red, blue, green, and white stones resulted, which we guessed included rubies or garnets, sapphires, emeralds, and zircons. (At least, we thought so, and we were not far wrong.) A strange tea-like odour filled the air, which we thought was the smell of the gas from the bottomless native wells,

but Long Tom told us that it was burning pidcherie we were inhaling, and that the pidcherie-drunk camp of harmless natives was asleep on the other side of the ridge. He did not smile.

We worked hard all afternoon and filled sacks with the unknown stones we broke out, having previously made a camp we could defend behind a huge blow of ironstone.

'I feel living again, mates,' spoke Charlie, towards sundown. 'But——' He shuddered—'I don't want to see our old camp again, though I reckon we'll have to let Jacky Jacky know somehow we are here.'

'Don't worry about Jacky Jacky,' I said, as Mac went out to see what the other side of the ridge was like. 'Wasn't he minus his big right toe?'

'I don't know if he were minus it or not, but he hadn't got one,' Charlie reflected, and I did not push the subject further. Just at sundown Mac reappeared round a big bluff and, to our surprise, a fierce-looking native was walking with him, but he was not Jacky Jacky. The aboriginal's naked skin was deeply gashed with old scars, and streaks of white paint over his ribs made him look like a walking skeleton. He was thus in full-dress corroborree order. While we watched they passed behind our barricade and Tom handed the savage a piece of tobacco with a kindly greeting to which the other responded.

'Jacky Jacky is just the duplicate of this fellow,' Charlie explained, 'but I expect he's lying low in the niggers' camp.'

'Out with the yarn, Mac,' said Big Sam, after we had exchanged glances. 'Is it Adelaide by first train?——'

'No, I don't think we need be in any special hurry so far as the natives are concerned. This very intelligent gentleman whom I met over the hill, whose ancestry connects back to the time when the slimy ooze of the ocean crawled on shore and became alive, can explain much, without understanding himself. Light up your pipe, Shakespeare, and tell us about the coming corroborree.'

Shakespeare's English had been acquired in a mining camp, and therefore his words may not be repeated without very drastic censorship. Shorn of the unnecessary and lurid adjectives, as near as I can remember, they were: 'Mighty big fool nigger from north tinks hims is big chief. Hims come alonga black fellows here and tell he kill lot white fellows. Hims say he call grand corroborree an' we walk fires—No fear! We no' want walk any fires. Hims say he kill white fellows but we laugh. No want kill white fellows. How black fellows get tucker if no white fellows out here?'

We play emu and other fool corroborree around him last night for fun an' he play big chief and swing ghingi-ghingi. Hims say hims fetch alonga white fellows' heads to-morrow morning to give to big devils, but we just laugh. Hims big liar. Hims can walk fire himself.'

The reader may not readily grasp the full purport of Shakespeare's words, but they were wonderfully illuminative to Mac, Sam and myself. . . .

That night we stretched ourselves out for sleep early. We were away from the gloomy creek, with its bunyips and ghosts and mysterious footprints, and we were tired. But Mac, Sam and I had tossed a coin before retiring to rest, and, as a result, Sam and I arose silently, when the stars indicated the approach of midnight, caught our horses and rode swiftly towards our camp on the creek. We carried our rifles, and we rather fancied we could look after our own heads. In a couple of hours we had hobbled our horses under the trees beside our mosquito nets and climbed into the branches overhead. We wanted to see who was coming for our heads. We had not been perched aloft more than ten minutes when a naked, painted savage slid silently down the opposite bank and threw himself flat on the sand. He was watching the speared nets, yet fearful of something. For half an hour he lay motionless and we were just as still. We were in no hurry. Suddenly the warrior arose and ran down the dry channel of the creek. Evidently he had satisfied himself that the occupants of the nets would never cause him trouble again, and he could get their heads in daylight when the devils were not about.

But the white men were close on his tracks and, a few minutes later, watched him carefully impressing his feet in the sand as he walked round the logs rolled in the pidcherie-seekers' blankets. *He was making the third circle!* Of course, by this time, Sam and I had grasped the scheme. The man thought he had killed us, but for reasons of his own, wished to frighten away Charlie and Tom if possible. His inherited fear, however, had prevented him from making sure of his work in our case and, although armed with spears, boomerangs, and a long bone dagger, he still seemed as if he were under the influence of some almost uncontrollable terror and would run at the slightest sign of movement of the blankets. It was impossible to recognise him in his ghastly, evil-smelling corroborree paint, but when he moved shudderingly towards the pool about a hundred feet away, and Sam and I crawled over to the footprints he had made and found, as I had expected, that the big

toe of the right foot was missing, we knew who the would-be-chief of the unknown tribe was. The fanatical maniac was addressing the volcanic pool in frenzied language, as we again got near him in the shadows. As nearly as I could make out his words were, in effect: 'Great Dweller in the Waters! I have obeyed Thy call. The white sorcerers will be Thy dogs and I shall be Thy Great Chief as were my Ancestors. Be not angry because I have not killed the others. They have fed me, but if they go not away to-night——' A splash in the pool made him pause in alarm. But he continued: 'Show not Thyself to Thy unworthy slave—Bilya!!' The last word was a shriek. A renewed splashing in the water had answered him and a something scrambled up the bank from the shallow part of the pool and disappeared amongst the trees. The man staggered, recovered himself and, turning to flee, still shrieking, saw us. His eyes were like electric lamps and seemed to light up the awful expression of fear in his face. I don't think he recognised us. He stood still, shook violently, and shouting in English, 'Shoot, white devils! I've seen the bunyip!' fell on the sand.

'Jacky Jacky,' I said coldly, 'we're not ghosts, and that was one of our pack-horses you saw in the water hole——' Jacky Jacky made no response. An explanation of his conduct would never be given. He had obeyed the bunyip's call. . . .

At sunrise we were back on the range, but we could not make our two friends believe that the evil spirit which had influenced them would trouble them no longer. 'Jacky Jacky saw the bunyip and *had to die*,' said Charlie, 'but the bunyip never dies.'

'And we'll not get any more pidcherie,' complained Long Tom, without smiling. He was now certainly practical. . . .

During the day we visited the natives' camp and told the aborigines of Jacky Jacky's fate. They were all half dazed with pidcherie, but seemed pleased to know that they still were without a chief who would insist on a fire-walking corroboree. They were as harmless a band of natives as I had ever seen. They gave our friends all the pidcherie they possessed in exchange for tobacco, tea, and sugar, but would not tell what it was, nor where they got it.

A week later five riders and five pack-horses, laden with opal and other gem-stones, said good-bye to the natives, and rode eastwards to the nearest railway and, like a certain famous character in history, Long Tom never smiled again! We finally reached Adelaide by steamer.

ROBERT M. MACDONALD.



# 'POOR MR. TIBBS.'

(CONCERNING A LITTLE CHEMIST AND JUNGLE PEOPLE.)

Is the story of Mr. Tibbs comedy or tragedy? It may be a matter of opinion. It certainly contains the absurd and the ordinary which furnish the needs of comedy, and there is something of unsought misfortune overtaking a virtuous man to make an element of tragedy, though there is little to stir the emotions to any extraordinary degree. The story might quite reasonably have been entitled 'Poor Musu' or 'Poor John,' her son, though it actually tells how Jim Maclaren obtained a kitchen coolie, who has since become his cook.

The villains of the piece are several. Little frail-bodied Miss Featherday was one; she lived in a tiled cottage by the side of a secondary road which leads from a main highway to the village of Beertoft, where it lies on the bed of a Devon valley below hills of hedged pastures and red ploughlands. Another of these villains was Mrs. Welling, who lived in the shadow of Beertoft Church, not four hundred yards away from Miss Featherday, and quite close to the third of the responsible trio, an aged Miss Bean, a seller of stuffs and sweets, candles and sugar, stockings and currants—the owner of the one general store in the village.

The lady called Mrs. Welling kept no store; she had a modest income left to her by her husband, and she spent her life busily in a garden where hollyhock bloomed after the primroses had perished, and where purple pansies lived until uprooted by one or other of the two marmalade cats. It may be presumed that Mrs. Welling tolerated the destructive activities of the cats, because she was more fond of the cats than she was of the pansies. She had always liked cats, whereas her husband forbade cats, marmalade or otherwise, to enter the garden, for he liked purple pansies. But when he died Mrs. Welling imported two cats at once, and through these creatures became very friendly with the notable Mr. Tibbs, the chemist. She admired the markings of her cats, and sent their frequent litters to be painlessly destroyed by Mr. Tibbs. And he, being a wise man, charged the price for sufficient chloroform to place the kittens in perpetual sleep, though actually he ended their



careers with the aid of a tub full of brook water, assuring their owner on each occasion that their end had been peaceful. Which was, in one sense, correct.

Mr. Tibbs was an earnest man, and as busy a man as the quietness of Beertoft would allow him to be. Besides being a chemist, he was the local news-gatherer for a county journal and an orator of some considerable ability. At every social and meeting in the district his voice was heard and his influence felt. When war came his earnest addresses convinced the sturdy men of the Devon valley that they and they alone could prevent German hordes flooding over the red-soiled hills, that they alone could save their thatched cottages from the blast of guns, their women from slavery, and their feather-legged teams from the task of drawing Hindenburg down Whitehall in triumph.

And with the end of war Mr. Tibbs turned his attention to peace with equal fervour, but with less success. He preached a gospel of Utopian internationalism, and urged the people of Beertoft to contribute pence towards the establishment of a League of Nations. Had Mr. Tibbs preached this doctrine in some other place but Beertoft he might have been the founder of the peace palace in Geneva. But the people in that valley were a level-headed lot, and had no interest in attributed German poverty, Slav-Magyar quibbles, or the institution of Jews upon the grazing grounds of nomad Arabs. Therefore, in spite of the fact that little Miss Featherday introduced Mr. Tibbs at all his meetings which Miss Bean advertised in her shop window and at which Mrs. Welling poured tea, the chemist had to admit defeat. More than once he was seen fleeing down a garden path followed by the broad-tongued denunciation of 'voruners and vorun parts' spoken by some housewife of Beertoft.

Though at present it may not be clear what these recorded facts have to do with Maclaren's kitchen coolie, it will be apparent later. They show that Mr. Tibbs' eloquence and earnestness were stifled, and this caused much concern to his three supporters. Something had to be done. Some new field had to be found for the energy and talent of the chemist. Before long an unknown press photographer contributed to the solution of the problem, and chance gave its fickle aid as well.

It was some time after the last lambs were dropped to swell the numbers of the sheep which dotted the hedged pastures; it was in the second week of a glorious spring, one evening, that Miss

Featherday turned the pages of an illustrated paper. It belonged to her lodger, a quiet, grey-haired man who had arrived, by way of London, from the heart of Africa. Miss Featherday always let her front bedroom in the spring and summer, for her income was less comfortable than that possessed by Mrs. Welling.

On turning over the sixth page of the journal Miss Featherday gasped, and then fearfully and sadly contemplated the photo of a magnificent Zulu herdsman. He was watching his cattle while his wife, squatting at his feet, pounded corn and guarded the rollings of her baby who lay nearby kicking, happy and naked, in the dust. Miss Featherday saw nothing fine in the stature of the man. She noticed he was only wearing monkey skins about his loins and that the woman's blanket had fallen below her shoulders.

Tears came into the little spinster's eyes, and then she shuddered and murmured, 'Terrible, terrible, poor dear heathen,' and this her lodger heard as he quietly entered the room at that moment. So he promptly sat down and told her much of the wild heathen among whom he had worked in Africa, China, and Siam. And next day Miss Featherday repeated all she had been told to Mrs. Welling, and then the two poured the same stories into the astonished ears of Miss Bean, with the result that that lady served a customer with sugar instead of sago; and with a further consequence that that very evening the disturbed trio took Mr. Tibbs to see the quiet, grey-haired lodger from Africa. And within a month Mr. Tibbs left the Devon valley, not for China, Africa, or Siam, but for India.

In that short time he had satisfied a society that he was an able person and earnest. With the advice of the grey-haired man neatly written in three exercise books, he sailed with a heart full of simple faith and purpose, and two wooden cases among his baggage full of shirts and petticoats made by Miss Featherday and Mrs. Welling. It is perhaps only fair to say Miss Bean sold them the material at cost price, for she, too, had looked upon the picture of the all but naked Zulu herdsman and had been convinced she should contribute to the clothing of the heathen.

Mr. Tibbs eventually arrived at Jim Maclaren's bungalow where it stood overlooking the Kadur hills, and Maclaren greeted him warmly, though he was very much amused.

Yes, Maclaren was amused as he saw the little man, tubby in figure and red of face, stumble on to his veranda. He was amused because he had seen, many years before, a man not unlike

Mr. Tibbs and engaged upon the same work, just as earnest and just as full of ignorance. This other man had failed shortly after he commenced for he had shot a monkey, and shot a monkey among a people who adored the subjects of Hanuman as much as they feared the anger of Khalhi. With the result that Mr. Tibbs' predecessor had to flee through the white mists of dawn, clad only in a suit of blue pyjamas, upon the back of a piebald pony.

Maclaren persuaded Mr. Tibbs to remain in his bungalow for a month in order that he might learn the language and a few of the characteristics of the people among whom he would work. Little by little Mr. Tibbs gained wisdom under the instruction of his host, the planter. It was the planter who comforted him when his hand was refused by a proud young Brahman, and it was Maclaren who laughed when Mr. Tibbs expostulated and objected that anyone should consider him unclean.

During that month he wrote to Miss Featherday and told her that all Indian women were covered, and that it was useless to offer shirts to the men as they immediately tied them round their heads. It was a very hot afternoon when he wrote the letter, and carelessly he employed the vernacular and called pig, *hundi*, saying he had seen several *hundi* killed by *ryots*. Which piece of news sent Miss Featherday running to Mrs. Welling, and between them they accused themselves of helping Mr. Tibbs into a wild land where tribal differences easily drifted into bloody disturbances. In spite of the advice contained in that letter Miss Bean was called upon to sell more stuff at cost price, as Mrs. Welling was sure clothing would purge the brutality from the souls of the heathen, much as a collar had quieted the spirit of one of her marmalade cats.

At the end of a month Mr. Tibbs began to fret. He was eager to start on his work. West of Maclaren's bungalow, beyond the last of the Kadur hills, there stretched a dense jungle containing many flat open wastes, too poor to grow paddy or millet, but just rich enough to support coarse grazing for small grey humped cattle. On the borders of these hidden wastes, in the shade of the jungle trees, were many grass villages occupied by the caste people known as the Kharitas—a community resembling the agile Kurumba hunters and the placid cultivating Gowdas, not, however, possessing the daring of the first caste or the patience and perseverance of the second. The Kharitas hunted lesser game only when drought killed their cattle. Cultivate they could not,

for their lands were too poor. They lived comparatively leisured lives as herd keepers, separated from the world by great walls of shadowed jungle and thick thorn growth which pressed against the fragile walls of their houses. 'Children of nature' is a correct and simple description of the Kharitas; staunch animists, convinced that they were subjects of the elements, the powerful gods who blessed and plagued them. And it is perhaps not surprising that they regarded the elements as the highest of powers, for it was the elements that starved and fed them in turn.

It will be ever to Mr. Tibbs' credit that he penetrated the jungle right into the heart of the Kharitas' country and fought dearly for life in a grass hut for six weeks while the kindly caste men erected a low-walled bungalow of stone. The Kharitas were astounded that any man should desire to build a stone house, they were amazed that such a man should pay four annas a day to those who lifted the stones in place. Whole villages came to assist, and had not Maclaren ridden after Mr. Tibbs, two weeks later, a vast bungalow covering many acres would have arisen from the ground and Mr. Tibbs' funds would have been distributed far and wide along the fringes of the jungle. Maclaren found the tubby little worker beset by a horde of natives clamouring to build extensions on to his modest and growing abode; and in fifteen minutes the planter drove reason into chaos, and sent scores of sorrowful and willing Kharitas muttering to their homes.

Next came the question of servants. Quite two dozen fought for admission to the ranks of the domestic staff, and again it was Maclaren who selected two and saved Mr. Tibbs from an army of willing serfs. Laboriously Mr. Tibbs learnt the peculiarities of the Kharita tongue; with amazement he watched the faith of the natives in their gods, the elements. At the end of three months he held his first class. He spoke for two hours to many hundreds of the caste-men, and then retired to a chair in the shade of his veranda and slept.

He awoke to find his congregation patiently waiting. The Kharitas were squatting where he had left them an hour before. His heart thumped with gratification. They had waited for him to speak again, their numbers had almost doubled. Runners must have carried word of his teaching to the most distant villages.

He rose from his chair and beamed upon the sea of eager brown faces.

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smiles broke over the faces of the assembly. It was then that Hutiji Mhandé rose and salaamed.

'Sahib, we will come to-morrow, and as the work of listening does not make sweat I will tell my people they must be content with four annas each for two days and not four annas each day for each one who listens.'

Mr. Tibbs whitened when he heard this. He became speechless, and weakly sank back into his chair while the jabbering crowd dispersed into the evening shadows. And early next morning the little chemist sent his house-boy to Hutiji Mhandé with a present of some Epsom-salt and a message, saying: 'He did not pay people to listen to him. He talked for their good and wished to tell them of a second life and how they might attain happiness therein.' Vainly Mr. Tibbs waited all that day for the coming of his audience. And while he waited, in every village round the hidden grass wastes, men talked of the strange sahib who paid for the building of a stone house, but who did not reward them for listening during many hours. A sahib who talked of a second life!

'Let it come, but first let the rains come to keep this life blessed with plenty. *Yhai*—the sahib is strange,' said Hutiji Mhandé to his son, and the villagers murmured their agreement when they heard Hutiji say this.

The Kharitas were children of the jungle, and because they were children their disappointment vanished in one night. As dawn sent its yellow lights over the hills, the herds were driven out as usual on to the flat grasslands by singing cattlemen, and all through the day's heat the sound of mournful songs mingled with the fretful squeak of parakeets. And as the cool winds of sundown stirred the tangled banks of grass, Hutiji Mhandé came to Mr. Tibbs' bungalow and placed a lime at his feet, hastening away before the surprised little man could utter words of thanks. That one yellow lime comforted Mr. Tibbs. He hoped it was a sign that after all his words would bear fruit, and that his hold on the heathen hearts of the Kharitas was beginning to be effective. And when three days later a dozen men placed limes about his feet and flower garlands round his neck, he presented their spokesman with the last shirt left in the wooden case, and slept dreaming happily of an armed knight routing the forces of darkness. But he did not know that the headmen of the villages had gathered in solemn conclave under Hutiji Mhandé and decided that he was sick with madness, and that all must help him in his trouble by endeavouring to comfort him.



The Kharitas, unlike most Indian castemen, treat madness with kindness and consideration and not with cruelty or ridicule. For this reason Mr. Tibbs received great kindness whenever he visited the Kharitas in their villages. This he did regularly, for after the one assembly before his bungalow they never came again to listen. On every visit he was given flowers by the natives, who hoped their scent would soothe the sahib's madness, and Mr. Tibbs gave them presents in turn, working on the assumption that they were like children and would only swallow medicine if preceded and followed by a lollipop. Having no more shirts to offer Mr. Tibbs was forced to issue gifts from the second case containing petticoats. The Kharitas found petticoats made far more clumsy *pugarees* than shirts, but nevertheless they contrived to wind them about their heads.

Maclaren heard of this. He chuckled to himself on many an evening as he lay smoking in his long chair watching the day slip into night.

Hutiji Mhandé grew concerned about the sahib. His madness did not increase, neither did it improve. So he called the headmen together and talked long and earnestly to them. When the conference concluded six young men were sent into the jungles armed with bows and slashing cutties. Hutiji Mhandé travelled, meanwhile, from village to village, and finally selected Musu as the loveliest of the Kharita girls. When the six hunters returned, the panther skin they brought back with them was quickly dried and draped over Musu.

She laughed as some older women tied rings of hog bristles round her ankles and more below her knees. She laughed again when more rings were placed round her wrists and arms. Finally a necklace of panther's claws and pepper seeds was hung about her neck, and when flowers had crowned her head she stood ready to be taken to the white sahib, who was mad.

She climbed on to a stretcher of bamboo held on the shoulders of a dozen men. Hutiji led forward followed by a score of tom-tom-beaters, Musu on the stretcher came next, while behind came several hundreds of both men and women from the villages.

Mr. Tibbs heard the drub of tom-toms approaching long before the procession filed to a halt before his bungalow. He watched Hutiji Mhandé salaam. He saw Musu climb eagerly from off the stretcher and follow the old native on to the veranda while the tom-toms throbbed out their wild rhythm. He noticed Musu's flashing white teeth, her slenderness, her height, and great liquid

eyes. Awkwardly Mr. Tibbs scrambled out of his chair to ask what it all meant, but before he could speak Hutiji Mhandé pulled away the panther skin and left Musu standing before the little chemist, radiant in the glory of her girlish beauty.

Mr. Tibbs' pipe dropped from his mouth and slithered on to the matting. His hands fell limply by his side and he stood and stared, repeating Hutiji's words over and over again:

'She is yours, sahib, find contentment. She is yours.' He might have stood staring helplessly at the girl for some time had he not heard the patter of the house-boy's feet in the passage leading from the rear of the bungalow. The noise brought Mr. Tibbs to his senses. He suddenly realised the position. The position was embarrassing. . . . Something had to be done.

With unusual agility the little man tore down one of the yellow curtains that hung above the veranda rail. He wrapped it round Musu, and then hastily sank back into his chair. So that when the house-boy emerged from the inner room on to the bamboo matting he saw the sahib sitting back with his eyes half-closed, sucking at an empty pipe, while the fingers of one hand drummed nervously upon a side table. Musu was kneeling before him, smiling into his face.

'David,' said Mr. Tibbs to his bearer, 'fetch me my medicine chest; I think this girl is ill.'

David re-entered the passage, smiling as he went. He knew why Musu was there.

Left alone again Mr. Tibbs felt less uneasy. He was heartily glad that Hutiji Mhandé and the other Kharitas had left at once. If they remained his position would have been intolerable. The little man sighed as he left his chair to pull down the second yellow curtain with which to complete Musu's clothing. When he had adjusted it, he felt better, more composed, and turned to look at the jungle hills, and it was then that perspiration broke out on his face. For sitting motionless at the bottom of the veranda steps on a black pony was a man—it was Maclaren, and he was grinning.

'Good afternoon, Mr. Tibbs, what is this I see?'

The planter dismounted leisurely and came up the three steps.

'Don't laugh, sir, don't laugh. I am in a fix. The Kharitas have brought this girl here and have left her.'

'Did you ask them to?'

asked Maclaren as he slipped into a chair.

'Ask them,' spluttered the chemist of Beertoft, 'ask them to bring a girl? No, indeed. Your suggestion is monstrous.'

'No, Mr. Tibbs, no, quite natural. However, I take your word.' He smiled as he watched the red-faced little man prance up and down on the matting.

'I do not wish to destroy the confidence of these simple people or hurt their feelings. They have done this out of kindness. I must return her to her village at once. But what excuse can I give?'

'Did they indulge in a sort of unveiling ceremony?' inquired the planter.

'Er—yes,' whispered Mr. Tibbs. 'Yes, most unfortunate affair.'

'Then,' continued Jim Maclaren, 'you can't send her back. If you did she would be tied up and taken into the jungle and left there for the jackals, for having failed to infatuate you.'

'Dear me, dear me,' mumbled the little man, 'dear me. What can I do. I suppose I must marry her.'

'Good heavens, no,' laughed the planter. 'Don't do that. Put her to work in your garden, and if you wish keep her out of your bungalow. The Kharitas sent me a girl once for saving the life of a man who had been crushed by a buffalo.'

'You put her in your garden,' said Mr. Tibbs, stopping suddenly before Maclaren. 'Was that satisfactory?'

'She died within a month from a cobra bite.'

'You must have been relieved,' sighed Mr. Tibbs, casting his eye over the garden as if searching for an accommodating snake.

'I wept like a child,' said Maclaren. Getting out of his chair the planter shook Mr. Tibbs by the hand and remounted his pony.

'I must be off, sir. Put her in your garden, that is the best way,' he said, as he rode slowly towards the jungle.

For three days and three nights Mr. Tibbs thought the matter over. Day by day his agitation increased until he finally packed Musu into a tonga and made for the Baheteghur rail-head. As soon after his arrival in Bangalore as possible Mr. Tibbs married Musu, and then returned to his bungalow where it stood sleeping on the edge of the flat grasslands.

He wrote to Miss Featherday and told her he had taken one of the people, among whom he worked, to his heart. And Miss Featherday shed a tear when she read that letter, and burnt one she had been about to send to the little chemist. It had told him

there was one waiting to make him a home whenever he returned from his heathen people.

In the night following the day on which Mr. Tibbs posted his letter, he heard tom-toms start a low throbbing chorus which seemed to rise from every Kharita village. He listened to the drone of the skin drums. There was something in the rhythm he had never heard before. It made him uneasy. The throbbing increased and seemed to drift, roaring and fading and roaring again on all sides.

Musu heard it. She laid herself down on the matting and moaned, her great eyes rolled with terror.

'What is it, Musu—a *pūja* feast?'

'No, they hunt,' whispered the girl.

'Why be afraid?'

'They go to kill man,' whimpered Musu.

'Who?' asked Mr. Tibbs. But the girl shook her head and resumed her moaning.

All that night the drub of tom-toms filled the echoes with threatening sound. As dawn yellowed the sky Jim Maclaren cantered up to the bungalow leading a spare pony. He was followed by his syce who led another pony.

'Don't talk, Mr. Tibbs, get on the pony at once. Put Musu on the other.'

Mr. Tibbs stared and asked what was the matter.

'The Kharitas want to pull your heart out for making Musu into a Christian. They gave her to you to make you happy, not for you to induce her to forsake the great gods—the elements. Get on the pony. Quick.'

Mr. Tibbs mounted in haste. The syce pushed the weeping Musu into her saddle, and then the four rode through the cool of breaking day away from the sound of beating tom-toms; a sound which was creeping nearer and nearer to the bungalow that they had left behind. And that hasty ride from the Kharita jungle was the beginning of a tedious journey for Mr. Tibbs and Musu; a journey that ended in a Devon valley on one cold dark wind-swept night.

Some months after their arrival in Beertoft Mr. Tibbs asked Miss Featherday, Mrs. Welling, and Miss Bean to tea. He told Musu they were very old friends and that she must look her best.

The three little women of Beertoft arrived and welcomed their chemist joyously, and then waited for the appearance of Musu.

She came in laughing happily, carrying a yellow baby in her arms. She had made herself look her best; she was dressed in a panther skin. Rings of pig bristles were tied round her ankles, below her knees, and on her wrists and arms. And a necklace of panther's claws and pepper seeds hung about her neck. Within fifteen minutes of her coming into the room the three little women of Beertoft hastily took their departure; and within a month of that memorable occasion Musu faded as a jungle flower will fade when uprooted from its native soil.

Four years later little Mr. Tibbs the chemist stopped brushing the leaves from his garden path, to wipe his moist forehead. And it was then that he saw Jim Maclaren smiling over the garden gate. And it was Jim Maclaren who took John, the son of Musu, back to India, and gave him in charge of his cook to accustom the yellow boy to the ways of the kitchen. John gloried in the sun and proved himself master of the other coolie children. Maclaren saw that he was happy and that made him smile.

There is only a little more to say. Miss Featherday still makes shirts. She buys the material from Miss Bean, but not at cost price, for the shirts are not for the naked heathen but for Mr. Tibbs. It is quite natural that Miss Featherday should make shirts for Mr. Tibbs, for she is no longer a frail little spinster—she is Mrs. Tibbs.

DENNY C. STOKES.

## THE GRANDFATHER OF MELODRAMA.

BY M. J. LANDA.

MELODRAMA seems at last to be loosening the grip it has maintained upon the majority of our theatres for more than a century. It is no longer the staple and almost exclusive fare of the second-class provincial theatres. Until the war brought the frenzied desire for the lighter and nondescript variety show in the form of the revue the minor playhouses lived almost entirely on crude melodrama. Week in, week out, in many instances without any break for pantomime, melodrama of the most blatant type, with lurid posters to match, held supreme sway in practically all but the 'first-class' theatres. Some of the 'Number Two' towns, as they are styled in 'the profession'—that is those which only received the London successes after they had been worn thin in the principal cities, and often not at all—and virtually all below the second grade, devoted themselves with a regularity bordering on fetichism to the type of play in which the hero and villain were duly labelled by appropriate bars of music, in which virtue always triumphed, and in which a frantic competition was developed for the introduction of the latest sensation. These plays thrive on artistic degeneracy. Their basis was standardised to an extent that made it possible for hacks to turn them out with amazing rapidity. Long ago, they were literally machine-made, a formal framework being filled in with regulation characters, incidents of a pattern, one varying from another only in the generalities of the theme, and perhaps differing merely in the names of the persons, their costumes, and the locale of the events.

The fundamental structure of crime and persecution, with the fretwork of comic endeavour further to embroil innocence or rescue it, was disguised of its sameness by a gaudy camouflage, sometimes military, sometimes maritime, or Colonial or Wild West, and so on. No little ingenuity was displayed in this decorative dissimulation. Plays were made to appear up-to-date by the suggestion that they were dramatisations of mysteries of the period, by the introduction of modern inventions and the utilisation of the latest devices. Many theatre habitués heard their

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first gramophone in a melodrama in which the instrument did a wonderful thing: it automatically overheard the plotting of a crime, stored up the information, and revealed it at the proper moment. They saw a motor-car beat a train years ahead of the cinema. Long before the Coliseum management conceived the idea of presenting a game of lawn tennis on its expansive boards, before the building was erected in fact, a representation of a real football match—with local players—roused intense enthusiasm in the melodrama theatres. Melodrama devotees were skilfully deluded into the belief that they were fortunate playgoers treated to the very latest of modern ideas on the stage, that they were being regaled with the newest drama, whilst—according to the critics—the West End was being fobbed off with hackneyed plots of a dead past. The secondary theatres of the provinces, and the subsidiary categories trailing away to the 'smalls,' the 'fit-ups,' the 'portables' (a link with the mere booth), were a preserve, catered for by managers and writers utterly unknown to the playgoers and students who considered themselves well informed. The output was prodigious, the resource endless. The mixture of Drury Lane inventiveness and transpontine heroics on the limited stage spaces was truly extraordinary: Sir Henry Irving, Sir Beerbohm Tree, J. L. Toole, Ellen Terry, and a dozen others put together could not have conjured up the thrill of the real road-roller lumbering along in a bee-line for the heroine who had fainted in its fairway.

Nothing stemmed the torrent of this drama until revue was borne madly along in the hectic rush to drown the echoes of the war. Whether melodrama will regain its kingdom in the counties remains to be seen. It may be that the day has arrived when its history should be written. That being so, it is as well to correct a false impression that has become a tradition. No history is more carelessly compiled than that of the theatre. Absurdities, trivialities, and errors are repeated until they become hidebound and ineradicable. One of the persistent delusions is that melodrama is a French importation. Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery*, produced at Covent Garden, November 13, 1802, is regularly cited as the first play of this kind staged in England. It was an adaptation of *Calina*, by Guilbert de Pixérécourt (1773-1844), who, according to the learned, was the inventor of this type of drama. Pixérécourt's own life might be responsible for the legend of his fatherhood. He was the son of a nobleman, was in danger of his



life in the French Revolution, afterwards lived in a garret where he painted fans for two francs a day, subsequently made a fortune with some fifty-nine plays and lost it in litigation.

But six years before Holcroft's adaptation, on September 10, 1796, a play by S. J. Arnold, entitled *Shipwreck*, was produced at Drury Lane with great success, and was actually condemned by the critics as 'abounding in claptraps,' quite a modern denunciation of melodrama. Some eighteen months earlier than *A Tale of Mystery*, on February 28, 1801, J. Fawcett's *Pérouse, or Desolate Island*, based on Kotzebue's *Pérouse*, contained a good deal of dumb action with descriptive music—the principal feature of the first melodramas—and also the character of a chimpanzee! This would give Germany a claim over France. Kotzebue, too, had a melodramatic career. A diplomatist as well as a dramatist, he entered the Russian service, and was assassinated in Mannheim in 1819 for his Russian sympathies. The speed and thoroughness of the march of melodrama in England was such that, on December 5, 1803, there was produced at Drury Lane *The Caravan, or The Driver and His Dog*, in which a dog saved an infant from drowning in real water, drawing from Sheridan the witty comment that it also saved the theatre. But even if actually melodrama in its definite form came across the sea, the ground was prepared by Englishmen whose literary work influenced foreign writers, certainly Pixérécourt. Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* was written in 1765, a year after the birth of Mrs. Radcliffe, of whose wild romances *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794, is the most sensational and celebrated. The greatest of these writers, 'Monk' Lewis, was born in 1775 (two years later than Pixérécourt), and his *Castle Spectre* was staged at Drury Lane in 1797.

Apart from these literary forerunners, more definite stage precursors of melodrama were the plays of Richard Cumberland (1732-1811), who was a successful dramatist before Pixérécourt saw the light. Cumberland, who lies buried in Westminster Abbey, is invariably remembered, when remembered at all, as the original of Sir Fretful Plagiary, in which character Sheridan mercilessly pilloried and immortalised him in *The Critic*. There was some measure of justification, and Garrick termed Cumberland 'the man without a skin,' owing to his sensitiveness. Nevertheless, Richard Cumberland has claims to a place in literary and dramatic history. The son of one Bishop and the grandson of another, he took a serious and even a fastidious view of his profession as play-

wright. He deemed the stage a pulpit for the ventilation of grievances, the denunciation of evils, and appeals on behalf of the unfavoured and unfortunate. He endeavoured to break down the prejudices against the Irishman in *The West Indian*, 1771, against the Scot in *The Fashionable Lover*, 1772, and made a still bolder plea on behalf of the Jews in *The Jew* in 1794.

He was the first to introduce purpose into drama in an age of artificiality. This undoubtedly redeems him from the charge of plagiarism levelled freely at him; his work widened the horizon of the stage and registers him as one of the pioneers of the problem play. By superimposing extraneous things on sentimental comedy, of which he regarded himself the High Priest, he laid the unmistakable foundations of melodrama. It seems only natural now that this form of play should be evolved from the sentimental comedy of the eighteenth century; for, after all, melodrama is sentimentality, crudely and vigorously expressed. Sentimental comedy, born of Colley Cibber, found in Cumberland its last and most frank exponent. As developed by him, there were divagations on the lines subsequently styled the formula of Pixérécourt. If the latter is to be termed the Father of Melodrama then is Cumberland distinctly the Grandfather. The definite form of the play in England owes more to Cumberland than to the French parent. It was Cumberland who invented the turgid dialogue, which, quite as much as the incident, gives English melodrama its special character.

Pixérécourt is credited with establishing the principle that four leading characters are essential—the hero, the villain, the persecuted heroine, and the simpleton (such as the village idiot, or stupid servant) for comic relief. These four characters, of course, are to be found long before. Shakespeare's *Othello* with *Othello*, *Iago*, *Desdemona*, and *Roderigo* at once occurs to mind. Pixérécourt, however, may have standardised them as a framework for incidents—or rather, his critics and admirers afterwards thus analysed his work. The subdivision of dramatic effort is none the less to be found in Cumberland before Pixérécourt was born. It is less conscious perhaps, but it is there, most definitely in *The Fashionable Lover*, produced at Drury Lane, January 1772, a year before the birth of Pixérécourt. The latter divided a piece into three acts devoted to love, persecution or misfortune, and triumph. Cumberland followed the fashion of five acts, but the content of *The Fashionable Lover* conforms to the three divisions

of the French writer, which are nothing novel and as inexorable in well-made drama as are exordium, argument, and peroration in a well-made speech. More important is it that in *The Fashionable Lover*, which was Cumberland's third play, deemed by the author, according to his prologue, his best, and proudly proclaimed as original, without indebtedness to any French source, the English dramatist created the much-harried heroine of melodrama and endowed her with language which may be declared to be still in use to-day. The persecuted lachrymose heroine, luxuriating in her sufferings, is completely embodied in Augusta Aubrey and enshrined in gems of perfervid threnody :

'How I am watched in this house you well know ; therefore you must not stay. What you have suffered for my sake I can never forget. May your life never again be exposed on my account.

'Tis vain to urge my innocence to you ; heaven and my own heart acquit me ; I must endure the censure of the world. . . . The last surviving orphan of a noble house, I'll not disgrace it.

'Wretched, unfriended creature that I am, what shall I do ?

'I have no home, no father, friend, or refuge in the world ; nor do I, at this moment, fainting as I am with affliction and fatigue, know where to find a hospitable door.

'Put me, I beseech you, in some present shelter, till the labour of my hands can keep me ; and hold me up but for a breathing space, till I can rally my exhausted spirits, and learn to struggle with the world.

'You have mischief in your minds, but I beseech you, leave me to my misfortunes, nor cast away a thought on a wretch like me.

'I accuse no one ; I submit with patience ; I am content to be the only sufferer in this business, and earnestly entreat you to desist from any altercation on my account.

'No, my lord, you've made me wretched—guilty you shall never make me.

'Why should I urge my innocence ? I am unfortunate, I am poor.

'The prayer and intercession of an orphan draw heaven's righteous benediction upon you !

'I have a father, then, at last ! Pardon my tears ; I'm little used to happiness.

'Upon my knees I do beseech you mitigate your severity ; it is my first petition ; he's detected ; let his conscience add the rest.'

There are other melodramatic characters in this same play, equipped with similar convulsions. The villain is Bridgemore,

Augusta's guardian, who robs his ward of her money. There is the long-lost father with 'The overflowings of a father's heart bless and reward you!' and his gallery-appealing denunciation of the villain, 'Raised by the bounty of my family, is this your gratitude? When, in the bitterness of my distress, I put an infant daughter in your hands, the last weak scion of a noble stock, was it to rob me you received her?—to plunder and defraud a helpless orphan, as you thought her. . . . Villain, I have the proofs!' There is the blundering, good-natured servant, a Scot, who befriends the heroine and—like the perfect comic-relief—dares to admonish his master, 'Pay your poor tradesmen; those are debts of honour,' and other comic 'foreigners,' indispensable to melodrama, in a French servant, a Welsh tutor, and a Jew. There is also a villainess, Lucy Bridgemore, who tries to ruin the reputation of the heroine; and the impulsive hero, 'I drew my sword in the defence of innocence; every man of honour would have done the same. . . . As for my poverty, in that I glory.' The entrance of the hero, or other person to put matters right at the crucial moment, is in this play, too, and virtue rewarded is the supreme tenet of Cumberland's dramaturgy.

*The Fashionable Lover*, if staged to-day, would seem by melodrama lovers to be a perfectly modern play.

In Cumberland's best play, *The West Indian*, produced a year earlier than Augusta's tearful *Odyssey*, there is a scene in which a titled lady and a lawyer plot the destruction of a will, with one of the earliest stage Irishmen overhearing and subsequently emerging from his hiding-place to snatch the document—an episode that has been the model for hundreds such in melodrama. In this play there are no fewer than three high-souled, high-falutin' heroes—Cumberland was young (in play-writing) and prodigal—the Irishman aforesaid, and two soldiers, father and son; whilst in the author's first play, *The Brothers*, December 1769, the hero is a sailor, with patriotic speeches of the type that made the Adelphi ring a century later:

'You now breathe the air of England—a rough reception it has given you; but be not, therefore, discouraged; our hearts are more accessible than our shores; nor can you find inhospitality in Britain, save only in our climate. . . . This I will say for my countrymen, that where you can point out one rascal with a heart to wrong you, I will produce fifty honest fellows ready and resolute to redress you. . . . One villain, however base, can no more involve

a whole nation in his crimes, than one example, however dignified, can inspire it with his virtues.'

This play ends with an interrupted marriage, the bridegroom-villain (the wicked squire) being confronted by his discarded wife!

There is the discarded wife again in *First Love* (Drury Lane, 1795), who, in the person of the famous Mrs. Jordan, had to utter the heartrending words, 'I am a miserable, solitary relict.' Cumberland bundled all his *clichés* into this, his poorest play, and his effeminate, quixotic hero, played by Mr. Palmer, the creator of Joseph Surface, must have revelled in such phrases as: 'May you find your happiness where mine was lost! Oh, Lady Ruby, pardon a distracted mind. . . . What she has to reveal to you, I know not: if misfortunes, you will pity them; if mistakes, you will pardon them—wronged she may be, guilty she cannot be. . . . I consider money but as dust to dust.' These sentiments are of the litany of the conventional hero of melodrama.

Poor Cumberland suffered much because of his sensitiveness to criticism; but in common fairness it must be admitted as strange that a Frenchman, not yet born when the Englishman's melodramatic bombast was being applauded in London, has been credited with something that, whatever its worth, should be attributed to an author, forgotten, although he sleeps in our national Valhalla. Study of the plays of the facile hacks of the first half of the nineteenth century, craftsmen of startling speed and precocity, leads to the irresistible conclusion that they must have written with the plays of Cumberland in front of them. They found him a well-stocked Army and Navy and Civilian Stores for stagewrights. To take two of these most prolific and successful journeymen in melodrama, W. T. Moncrieff (1794-1857), who churned out nearly 200 pieces, and J. T. Haines (1799-1843), proportionately more in a shorter life, particularly nautical contraptions. In *Van Diemen's Land* (Surrey Theatre, February 10, 1830), which Moncrieff wrote for the famous Elliston, and *Ruth, or The Lass that Loves a Sailor* (Vic., January 23, 1843), two big successes, Augusta Aubrey is simply reproduced. *The Fashionable Lover* founded a fashion and a love for filching. In Moncrieff's play Eliza White wanders through the piece thusly:

'There is no rest nor joy for me! Wretched Eliza, what solace is there now for thee on earth? The consciousness of innocence! But, despite its powerful influence, I sadden, sicken, droop, despair!

Surely, surely, I am but too severely tried—and I was once so happy! . . . Early an orphan, servitude was my sole resource against the miseries of privation. Received into a tradesman's family, I laboured cheerfully—I served him faithfully! All was content and pleasure, until, unhappily, my master's son—spare my confusion, sir . . .

'Oh, if you know aught of that fatal mystery—if you know aught that can confirm my innocence, reveal it, I conjure you! Here, on my knees, I ask, implore, entreat! Reveal it; I will bless, will worship you! . . . Oh, if ever you felt one pulse of pity—if you'd atone past wrongs, and hope for mercy—forgo your dreadful purpose; save this devoted family your vengeance has consigned to perish! Angels will bless you! Here, on my knees,' &c., &c.

Eliza, as a housemaid, must have suffered badly from the illness due to her profession, judging by her readiness to go down 'on her bended.' The Ruth of Haines is also an orphan, in service, insulted by a 'titled villain,' and given to indulgence in knee-drill.

'I had fled towards my home from the insolence of wealth and pride, and my eyes were blinded with tears, drawn from my orphan heart by memory. . . . My heart swelled proudly, and I went out into the world to beg for service. I cared not how lowly the employment so 'twas honest. . . . And now, when weak and friendless, fainting and storm-drenched, I seek a shelter from a fearful wrong, you insult me with your bitter speech, and, forgetful of your sex's sweetest duty, refuse a suffering woman aid.

'On the morrow, when the sun shines and a bright day is before me, with a clear conscience and a heart willing to toil, I will go forth, and I am sure that a just providence will not suffer a poor girl who has done no wrong to perish for want of a morsel of food or a roof to shelter her. . . . Yes, lady, by yon bright heaven, I fled to save my honour and your peace! . . . Homeless, despised and friendless—a felon's gaol yawns to receive its victim—to herd with wretches—to be linked with guilt—perchance, to be condemned—a scaffold! Would I were in my grave! . . .

'Oh, why—why have I not known before I had a parent living? . . . I am innocent—in-no-cent! . . . Encompassed thus by guilt, what will be my fate? Is there no one here will aid a wretched girl?'

The comic Scotsman and the entrusting of a child, 'scion of a noble stock,' to one who betrays the trust are also in this play.

Moncrieff and Haines, and others who could be cited, were mere



theatrical purveyors of whom nothing better was to be expected. But two authors of a totally different stamp, Douglas Jerrold and Shirley Brooks, also drew on the sob-stuff in the Cumberland reservoir. Jerrold's famous *Black-Eyed Susan* (Surrey Theatre, June 8, 1829) is clearly an offspring of Augusta :

'Beggars, sir! I am your brother's orphan child. . . . I am poor, sir—poor and unprotected—do not, as you have children of your own—do not insult me (*weeps*). . . . I feel forebodings which I know 'tis weakness to indulge.'

Shirley Brooks's Louise Fauriel, in *The Creole* (Lyceum, April 8, 1847), is more emphatically a product of the Cumberlandian incubator :

'But the doom is spoken—the dreadful barrier looms hideously upon me. . . . It could not be—the sacrifice could not be demanded from a wretched girl. . . . No, in mercy's name, do not speak of him. Leave me, leave me to my misery. . . . Do not deceive one who has no means of redress or revenge, let who will injure her. . . . I prayed in abjectness and terror, and he refused to hear me; and yet, while I clasped his arm, when I sank at his knee'—(oh, that overworked feminine joint!)—'I could see the convulsive struggle of his frame. . . . I am the victim of some foul, dark plot, which I understand not.'

In this way, by playwrights of repute, as well as by the wholesale dramatists of the ready-made pieces, was the chain of tradition 'forged' (the pun is intentional), and the artificial rhodomontade of the eighteenth century stabilised into the vocabulary of the stage-folk of nineteenth-century melodrama.



## 'FLIES.'

BY MURIEL D. BLANCKENSEE.

It was always said of Richard Lester that he 'couldn't bear to hurt a fly.' The remark was literally true; but very literally. For although he never brought himself to hurt a fly, he had no objection to the fly's being hurt. He would say 'Oh, here's another of these wretched insects buzzing around! No, I don't like killing the things. But you can whack at it with this book—here you are.' And he would thrust the weapon into his neighbour's hand, and look in the opposite direction while the deed was being done.

At school, he never stole plums, although a treeful of them hung provocatively above the wall between the playground and the Doctor's garden. But, coveting them as much as any of those boys who boldly slipped out at dawn and pillaged the tree, he rummaged in his 'tuck-box' for the rather dull sand-cake at the bottom, and fixed upon Maitland Minor to whom to offer it as backsheesh. This choice betokened his subtle—not to say sly—powers of discrimination, even at that age: for Maitland Minor was probably the only boy in the school who combined the audacity to carry off a bagful of the Doctor's fruit with the meanness of doing it for a bribe from 'Girly' Lester. Moreover, he could be trusted not to betray his instigator, if he himself should be caught red-handed. He was not caught; and Lester, after devouring the unripe plums and undergoing the resultant pains, forgot all about the matter. I mention this episode, as well as his attitude towards the extermination of flies, not because it had the slightest effect upon his after-life, but merely to give a glimmering of the character of the man. It was not precisely cowardice, either; it was rather that he was not of the criminal type. He shrank from committing such brutalities as killing and thieving. At the same time, he craved for the things which would result from these brutalities. A delicate situation: but easily solved—by employing an agent.

He disposed of the gawky transition-period between boyhood and manhood by two years of Continental travel, and when he returned to take up the lucrative and unlaborious post awaiting him, he was acclaimed, at least by all the ladies of his acquaintance,

as 'quite charming.' His manner was the very epitome of courtesy. He could listen to meandering confidences with an expression of positive raptness, and could throw across a conversational gulf a footbridge of most convincingly-fluent banalities. There was scarcely an evening when, returning from the office at half-past five, he did not change into a dinner-jacket and depart again to adorn some one's drawing-room. He had inspired three different girls with a hopeless *grande passion* by his mere gesture of doffing his hat; not with an extravagant sweep, but, as one of them said, 'As if he really meant it, my dear! As if it was his heart instead of his head that he was uncovering to you. It gives you thrills.' But he never appeared to *receive* thrills—until Barbara Morton came upon the scene.

Barbara was almost as much sought after as he, and the fact was beginning to pall upon her. She was tired of the callowness of awkwardly-tentative boys and the fatuity of middle-aged or elderly men. She was girlishly desirous of being admired, but wished that she had a worth-while admirer. When she met Richard Lester, she thought that she had found one. Like all the other girls, she insisted that he was 'not good-looking, exactly. I can't stand good-looking men, they're so insufferably conceited. But, there is something about him . . .'

Indeed, there was quite a lot about him, for every one to see: a self-contained mien, a crop of sleek dark hair, straight features, rather full lips. The one thing about him which seemed to be perceived by Barbara alone was what lurked at the bottom of his eyes. Even she could not name or analyse it, but she knew that it was there. It intrigued her. It aureoled him with mystery, making him different from all those other men of whom she had had a surfeit. What brooded in the depths of his eyes was dark and strong and inscrutable. And every one else appeared blind to it, merely thinking him 'quite charming'—well-bred, entertaining, and possessed of other qualities equally pleasant and equally superficial. Little did they know!

She had always had a weakness for dreaming of the standard Strong Silent Man. But here was one whose strength was so intense and whose silence was so deep that he actually concealed them beneath a mask of ordinariness. Only by herself was the mask ever to be lifted, of that she was sure. So she fell in love with the hidden strata that she sensed in him; and thence, she went on to fall in love with himself, and to have her feeling answered in some

measure. For she was lustrously beautiful, with a mass of spun-gold hair and great dark eyes; and she was haunted by that spirit which ever strives between heaven and hell, and which is called Temperament.

His proposal took place in the library of her father's house. He had never touched her before, never even laid his hand upon her arm. He had marvellous self-control and infinite patience when he really meant to attain a thing. He set about it watchfully, stealthily, taking no chances through forcing a crisis too soon. So, when he suddenly stopped his flow of talk and came across to her chair, her heart thudded at his look newly-revealed. And when, without a word, he drew her up and crushed her hotly against him, she threw her arms around his neck and pressed closer still; and then was ashamed, and hid her face, so that he could see only the massed gold of her hair.

Those were wonderful weeks which followed. He laid before her all his chivalry and charm, lit to flaming splendour by his passion. Every gleam of love that he showed her, she answered with a sort of adoration. She was of those who must always give more than they are given. Sometimes she could not let her eyes meet his, being afraid for him to see the intensity of feeling smouldering there.

After the wedding and the honeymoon in Italy, they settled down into their compact little house in one of the most pleasant parts of London. For twelve months Barbara was deliriously happy. Then there came the first rift.

It was she who brought it about. She was feeling fretful. The unromantic truth was that she was developing a heavy cold, and her head ached and her eyelids seemed leaden. She and her husband were due at a dinner that night: but she told him that she was not going. Then she watched covertly to see how he received her decision; for she was aware that to him a social engagement was no less than sacramental; to break it lightly was the eighth and deadliest sin of all.

She saw his disapproval and—since she did not yet know him—waited for the heated remonstrance which, of course, was not forthcoming. It was very far from Lester's habit to make a direct attack. He said, coldly, that she had better go to bed, and he would make her excuses to their hostess. With tightened lips he turned again to the opened drawer in front of him, and selected a new dress-collar. Barbara stood crushing back an onrush of unaccount-

able chagrin. She wanted neither to go to bed nor to go out to dinner. Nor did she want to stay at home alone. Why couldn't Richard have said that he would stay with her? She wouldn't have let him, of course. But . . . but he might have made the offer. Or why hadn't he grumbled at her and worked up a quarrel? She wouldn't have minded a quarrel—with a reconciliation at the end. An excited outburst on both sides, that should have swept away this fretfulness that she couldn't throw off; and then the peacemaking.

She watched him dressing. She wandered in and out of the room, querulously, her resentment growing until it burst through all restraint of silence.

'Richard, I wish you wouldn't go out to-night. You might stay at home with me. It'll be hateful, left here alone.'

He stood up from his meticulous adjustment of the laces on his patent shoes, and regarded her in a way that made her grit her teeth together. He moved across to the telephone and rang up the house at which they were due in twenty minutes' time. He was answered by a servant.

'No, don't trouble Mrs. Harman to come down. If you will please give her a message. Tell her that Mr. and Mrs. Lester are exceedingly sorry, but . . . ' There followed the requisite excuses couched in the standard phrases. After replacing the receiver, he bent down and demonstratively untied the laces of his patent shoes and unfastened his dress-collar.

It was a miserable evening. They sat down to a hastily-prepared and inadequate dinner at home. At intervals Richard asked Barbara coldly if her headache was better, and advised her to take aspirin. For the rest, every facial expression of his, every gesture, tapped across to her as if by wireless the unspoken question: 'Well, what did you want me to stay at home for? What's the sense of it? What good is my deprivation doing you?' Sometimes she tried to talk to him, as if to make amends. Sometimes she was wearily silent. Through everything he conveyed to her his displeasure. His frigid but unimpeachable manner towards her balked alike her approaches and her sullenness.

Suddenly her racked nerves could bear it no longer, and she burst into tears. She cried softly and miserably, like a tired child. Even then, she had an instinct that Richard would be detached and critical, that he would notice how her face was puckered up and how unattractive she looked. She thrust back her chair and, with

handkerchief pressed against her mouth, went blindly from the room and up the stairs. She dropped down beside her bed and sobbed with her face buried against the counterpane.

'I'm a fool,' she told herself. 'There's nothing wrong, really. It's just that I'm feeling rotten—this cold coming on, and the headache. And Richard doesn't understand, when a woman isn't feeling well; some men don't. I'm a fool, crying about nothing.'

She took the little wet mop that had formerly been a handkerchief, and dabbed at her eyes with it. But just then she heard Lester's approaching tread, and her head sank down again in concealment. He came and stood in the doorway and scrutinised her. She became aware that her black dress had crumpled up to her knees and had half slipped from one shoulder. He would be noticing these things—and disapproving. Queer, how she suddenly seemed to know him in ways of which she had never dreamed before! Had the perception really come all in a lightning-flash like this? Or had it long been lurking there, ostrich-like, burying its head in the sand? And yet, if he came to her and put his arms about her shoulders, all the truth and the clear-sightedness would melt away like an evil vapour. She would know nothing again: she would not let herself know.

He spoke, from the doorway. 'I insist upon your going to bed, Barbara. I have told Lawson to bring you up a glass of hot lemonade—that will be the best thing for your cold, and should help you to sleep. I shall come up later. Good night.'

She waited for him to kiss her. Instead, she heard him close the door—on the other side. His tread retreated down the stairs.

She was in bed when Lawson brought the lemonade. Richard was right—bed was the best place for her. She could pretend to be asleep when he came in. She lay rigid, trying to breathe naturally, not to let her breathing heave into sobs as it strained to do. The lemonade did not make her sleep.

The next morning, he greeted her in a fashion so like his usual one that she wondered if it was not her imagination merely which whispered that something was lost. Afterwards, her imagination ceased to whisper it, for her knowledge accepted it and stored it away in the deepest hold, out of sight. That was the beginning: that was when Barbara had her first glimpse of those abysses in Lester at which she had guessed. Since the betrothal-day she had been too happy, too well-satisfied with the attractive outward self that he had shown her, to grope about in the dark and rather morbid

underworld of psycho-analysis. But now she had a fear that some of her old wonderings were to be answered, and that the answers were not those which she desired.

She learned much in the ensuing weeks. It was as if that small, impatient rap given by her petulance had shattered the thin film of her husband's charm. Or was it the film of her own illusions? In either case, it lay broken: or, at the least, it was cracked and gaping. He had not kissed her good night when he had found her crying. The thought fastened upon her like a burr—tiny, sticky, infinitely fretting. That first estrangement was fraught with such significance as the first one must always have. At intervals, she called herself the fool that she was, for making so great a grievance out of nothing.

But then there came real quarrels. Always it was she who definitely began them. He never took the open offensive; but she had a suspicion that he machinated them silently, cunningly, she did not know why. She began to be vaguely frightened of the thing that she could not understand.

Their breaches sprang from diverse origins. There were contentions over his love of the perpetual social round, when she wanted sometimes to remain at home. There was another over the question of where they should spend the Easter holiday. Each time, Barbara would eagerly have sacrificed her preference to his, if only he had not subtly made her feel that she ought to do so; or if he had even seemed to regard it as a sacrifice, instead of as a duty. She discovered that when he wanted anything he was selfish and rapacious in obtaining it. Yet he did not snatch it. He set to work upon the impinging circumstances, weaving them into a sort of net, which finally ensnared for him—while he stayed inviolably passive—whatsoever he coveted. And in these hard, deadly-cold duels of theirs, there was never any 'making it up.' Each one widened the cleft.

Especially significant was the dispute about their holiday. They differed in their preference of hotels. As usual, he appeared not to force his own desire, but to surrender to hers; and, as usual, it was ultimately his own which was gratified. After booking a room at the hotel of *her* choice, he discovered that, owing to unexpected circumstances at the office, he would not be able to take his holiday at the settled time. Of course, if Barbara wished it, she could go alone. Barbara did not wish it. Cancelling the room, they found that they could not be accommodated at that hotel for



a later date; so they went to the one which Richard favoured. And Barbara wondered, and called herself a beast for doing so . . . and went on wondering.

In the autumn, Lester took to going out unaccompanied by her. She disliked the stereotyped visits and dinner-parties; therefore he went alone to them. Left at home, she was restless and resentful, with the old feeling of the purposelessness of her life, and the stagnation. Although she did not recognise it, this was in reality a craving for excitement. In truth, the pyre was stacked ready and over-ready for lighting, when Russell Haynes came into her life.

It was Lester himself who brought him. At the first sight of that lean, forceful face, with the drawn cheeks and the repressed mouth, and the grey eyes very clear and very resolute, there was a stirring in Barbara's blood. He greeted her indifferently, as few men did. During the hour-and-a-half when the three of them were together, most of the talking was done by Lester; Russell Haynes answered him at the necessary periods and sometimes added 'leading' remarks; Barbara was almost silent.

Five days later, she met him in Regent Street. From afar she recognised him, more by instinct than by sight. She noticed that his height was above the average, and that he was walking at the edge of the roadway, to stride past the loitering crowds. He was about to pass unnoticed, but she stopped him deliberately and spoke the more formally in defiance of the pounding of her heart. He scarcely troubled to answer her phrases. He was looking at her as if he had not been able to see her five days ago. His scrutiny burned itself into her, and she stood with face lifted motionless to his view, as if she were undergoing a test. He told her to come and lunch with him at the Rackham. She went.

He took her upstairs, where the side-tables were in privacy, protected by high red screens, and where there was an air of leisure and sumptuousness. A waiter appeared, attentive, but not importunate. Russell Haynes asked Barbara what dish she would have, but when she appeared irresolute he took the menu out of her hand and peremptorily made a choice for both of them. He spoke very little. She thought of the occasions when she had been taken out to lunch by Richard, and of how he had set himself to entertain her; of his little courtesies and the deference which had thrilled her with a sense of her own womanhood. But with this man there was no room for thought of her own womanhood: her whole consciousness was dominated by his virility.



Looking back upon that hour, it seemed to her that she had never known one so tense. When she talked, her words fell futile and puny against his unresponsiveness; which piqued her pride and stung her into a silence like his own. She wondered what he was thinking of her. His grey eyes were upon her, bright and edged as steel, and there was no stealthiness in their depths. Yet she could not read them. She looked at him, and was most naïve in this: that she did not know how much her eyes betrayed.

His face changed suddenly, and she felt a tension relaxed.

'You . . . you aren't very talkative,' she said, and herself realised how childlike the remark sounded. But she was being childlike in self-defence, making appeal to him; half drawing back from the brink of the chasm, half fascinated to peer into it.

He answered her, thus pushing her back into safety. 'No, I learned the habit of silence out in Australia,' he said.

'You have been in Australia? Prospecting?'

'No. Doing almost everything but that. Coal-mining, among other things. And navvying.'

Involuntarily, she glanced at his hands. They were big and somewhat rough, with blunt fingers and irregularly-shapen nails. Not sensitive hands, but those of a manual worker—a labourer.

'Yes,' he said, 'they bear the marks.' He laid them flat upon the table, and she stared at them. Her objective consciousness registered the strangeness of it, the utter contrast with all that she had ever known before.

'Once a load slipped and came crushing down on this hand. It smashed up the wrist. You can see the scar—along here.' He traced the line of it, long and ragged, token of pain unflinchingly endured . . . she knew that he had endured it unflinchingly, with firm, shut lips. She lifted her own hand and touched the scar with a little pitying gesture. He gave no quiver of movement, no flicker of a nerve. His very immobility frightened her. She jerked away her hand and took up her fork with fingers that trembled.

Soon afterwards, he called for the bill. He let the waiter help her with her fur coat, and followed her down the stairway at a little distance. They stood for an instant outside the revolving doors, and it seemed to her that Life held its breath in suspense, and Past and Future swam towards each other and were merged into Now. For one instant that hung quivering like a raindrop at the edge of a leaf . . .

'When am I coming to see you?' he said.

'I don't know.'

'To-morrow evening?'

'My husband is . . . We have a dinner-engagement to-morrow. And another the next day.'

'To-morrow suits me better. You can be kept at home by a headache. I shall come early.' He waited for neither acquiescence nor protest, but swung himself aboard a passing 'bus and was gone.

During the remainder of that day, and all the ensuing one, she toyed with the idea of not seeing him when he called, of directing a message to be given to him at the door, saying that she was out. She might go out in fact; or she might stand behind the window-curtain and watch his coming, and listen to his voice in the hall; and watch him depart again, baffled and piqued. There were many things that she might do; but as soon as the front door slammed behind her husband—smoothly-groomed and immaculate from silk hat to glistening shoes—she began dressing for her reception of Russell Haynes.

He came, and they sat in her boudoir. He went, and still she knew but little the more of him. She did not hanker to know. They made no appointment for their next meeting. There was infinitely more allure in its being indefinite, undemarcated. He would come to her when the desire urged him; she would await him in an exquisite suspense of prolonged expectancy. He came again and yet again.

Now it was only at breakfast-time that Barbara and her husband were together regularly. Richard seemed to be spending more hours at the office, and when he returned from work it was only to change his clothes and set out for someone else's house. Sometimes Barbara wondered sardonically what he *thought* that she was doing, left there alone. He could no longer reach to hurt the depths of her; but a woman's vanity is an untethered weed for ever floating upon the surface, and this was still within his grasp. His indifference still nettled her, and she tried to prick it with little poison-tipped allusions and insinuations. She could discover no sign that she was being successful.

Meanwhile, her relationship with Russell Haynes ascended the scale upon all the usual notes; and, inevitably, the man was intent upon attaining the topmost, and the woman would fain have lingered upon each. The one quality which distinguished it from

the common tenor of such affairs was its greater downrightness, its disdain of any glamorous veil of sentimentality. Russell Haynes was ruthless about this. When, in a moment of emotional relaxation, she spoke of how Richard had failed her, he cried sharply: 'For goodness' sake, don't go weltering in the usual morass of self-pity over not being "understood" by your husband! As if a woman would ever have it otherwise! As if it weren't her greatest pride to consider herself unfathomable and mysterious, and as if she didn't feel positively exultant when a man told her "I can't understand you at all." Say, if you like, that you don't fit in with your husband—which is probably as much your fault as his: except for the fact that he doesn't gather up his strength and crush you into a shape that *will* fit in!'

'Russell, don't be hateful!' she said; and could not keep the happy thrill from her voice. It was the first time that he had spoken in just this strain, and she vibrated to every new thing that she found in him, because it gave her still more of him to love.

He looked down at her with smouldering eyes. 'You like to feel the streak of brutality in me. It gives you a greater delight in your conquest, primitive that you are!'

Primitive indeed did they look when her husband stood upon the threshold of the noiselessly-opened door and stared at them as at two actors in a staged drama of passion: he with his arms round her like welding bands of iron, she with head thrown back in abandon, and mouth tilted to his. Richard Lester's hands clenched upon themselves until the nails dug deep into the palms. He stepped back and closed the door behind him, noiselessly despite the twitching of his fingers. He went out again into the night.

For three months life reeled on for Barbara, and between the vital moments with Russell Haynes her existence was still chained to that of Richard Lester, and fear and hatred and horror writhed underground. Once already Russell had spoken of an elopement, and although she had managed to jerk away from the question, she knew that it was only because he had allowed her to do so. Sometimes she could feel every impulse in her battering against the gates of control; always she knew that it was but a matter of months, maybe of weeks, before Russell should snatch up her life, snapping the tendons that held it in place, and do with it as he willed.

Suddenly she had a feeling that her husband knew. She thought

that he looked at her strangely. Sentences that he spoke seemed to have a crawling significance; questions that he asked casually, haunted her with a sense of things creeping up behind her, ready to spring. He knew, surely he knew! Only, he was waiting, weaving the net around her. She could almost feel its clammy threads brushing her.

Then again it seemed that he did not know, and her horror was of herself, of her treachery. She thought that her love for Russell was sinful, and must be accursed. Even in his arms she would start in terror at the banging of a wind-blown door and hear a phantom footstep on the stair. Her sleep was stricken with evil dreaming, and she would awake with an instinct that she had been calling aloud. Richard and she had separate rooms now, but, waking, she would have a sense that her door had just been soundlessly opened. Once she leapt from her bed and stood outside the room, peering for a shadowy form, a movement. But there was nothing: only silence, and the darkness.

Then Richard had influenza. It was an intense attack, touching the lungs, and with attendant fever. For three weeks Barbara nursed him. For three weeks she did not see Russell Haynes.

One evening at the end of Richard's convalescence, she was sitting in the armchair opposite his own, lying back against the cushions, overwearyed with the long effort of her nursing, and feeling as if all vitality was drained from her. She wanted only Russell, just to lie in his arms, to rest in his strength. Russell, Russell!

She looked across at the man who was her husband. He still bore traces of his illness, and looked a little pitiful. His lingering weakness, his white face and the rumpled hair above it made appeal to something still latent in her, and an ache clutched at her throat.

Then, because she was sorry for him, she hated him—in self-preservation; and because he hurt her, she had an instinct to hurt him also; and because she had wronged him, she made to turn upon him in attack.

'Richard, I've got something to tell you.'

He looked at her, and she could not answer his gaze. She stared down at the carpet and tried to find the words with which to go on. He waited, and there came to her a wild rebelliousness against fate. It wasn't fair, this intermingling of lives, this terrible responsibility for other people's welfare or ruin. Richard was

lovable still, although not by her. Even she could still find something appealing in him: in another woman he might kindle love. He might find happiness with another woman. Every one had a right to rush towards happiness. Herself, Richard . . . It was unbearable that others should be in the pathway, to be trampled down and mangled. God, it was unbearable!

'Yes?' said Richard. 'What have you to tell me?'

What, indeed? She must have been mad, that she had begun to speak! What could she say to him? Had she really begun, was it irrevocable? Couldn't she stop, turn back, even now? But no. She tautened her courage to its utmost.

'Richard, I . . . It will come as a shock to you, I suppose, although we haven't pulled together very well lately . . . I . . . I'm desperately sorry . . .'

It was the glint in his eyes which stopped her faltering: the glint that is in the eyes of a cat while it watches the convulsive movements of a mouse with which it is playing before making the final pounce.

It flashed to her then: '*This* is the answer! *This* is the hidden thing that has always lurked at the bottom of his eyes. This wiliness, this skulking cruelty!'

For a moment she considered him. Then, no longer faltering, but with a steeliness like that of one sword out-thrust upon another, she said what she had to say: that she had a lover; that she desired her freedom by divorce.

'And his name?'

'You know it already.' (How sure was her sudden knowledge, beyond all reasoning!)

'Yes. It is Russell Haynes.'

Their glances met and interlocked. His was coldly triumphant. Even then she could not believe what she knew. Mechanically she stammered that she was sorry, desperately sorry. There escaped from him a little laugh with a fiendishly mocking ring.

He rose from his chair and said that he was going out. She cried out at the folly of that, after his illness.

'Why should that worry *you*?' he said, with another little venomous laugh. The front door slammed behind him.

He hailed a taxi and drove to a house in West Central London, and entered it as one who had the right. He was received by a woman older than his wife and of a different type—dark, sinuous of movement, full-figured, with voluptuous lips and half-closed

eyes. She wore a glittering gown that revealed every contour of her limbs.

'We are nearly through with the waiting now,' he said to her. 'This evening she told me she wanted a divorce. I knew that with Haynes it would be swift as well as sure!'

'It has taken long enough,' the woman answered in a padded voice, with a slow sidling glance at him. 'There would have been no waiting if you had been man enough to face an hour's unpleasantness.'

'Ah, but I have always disliked facing unpleasantness.' He crossed to the divan on which she had coiled herself. 'I could never bear to hurt a fly myself. I always had to get other people to kill the things for me. But now, I have found even a better way,' and his lips drew back from his teeth in a distorted smile. 'I hang up gummed paper beneath the lure of the electric-light—and the flies themselves rid me of their presence.'

# ITALIAN BANDITTI IN 1820.

BY GEORGE GRIFFITH.

## FOREWORD.

CERTAIN of the incidents described in the following narrative were communicated, probably I think by Mrs. Hemans, to Washington Irving, and were used by him in the 'Tales of a Traveller' which he published in 1824 over the name of Geoffrey Crayon—I have an old copy of the book. But the narrative has never been printed, the facts are now a hundred years old, and as they not only present an authentic picture of Italian brigand life, drawn by a shrewd observer, but throw some light on conditions in Naples during the revolution in 1820, I venture to think that they may be found of interest to-day.

Among those who, when the Continent was opened to English travellers at the close of the French wars, early seized the opportunity, was my father, George Griffith, then a young barrister of the Middle Temple. He was a son of John Wynne Griffith of Garn in Denbighshire, Member at the time for the Denbigh Boroughs. A capable linguist, he made a lengthy tour through Europe, and at the close of 1820 he was on his way from Rome to Naples, when the experience here to be told befel him. He survived the adventure for some fifty-seven years, succeeded my grandfather at Garn in 1834, and died, after playing a considerable part in county business, in 1877. I can vouch for the authenticity of the narrative, as I heard it on more than one occasion from his lips.

The Captain Hemans referred to is noteworthy, I think, as the husband of Felicia Hemans, the poet, whose fame is not now so bright as it was, but who was praised in her day by Scott, by Shelley, and by Byron. He had seen service in the Peninsula in the Fourth Foot, but retiring had lived for some years with his wife's family at Bronwylla, which is near Garn, and near also, I may add, to Brynbella, the seat of Dr. Johnson's Mrs. Piozzi, two of whose silver tea-caddies I still have at Garn. There had been differences between husband and wife, and Captain Hemans had gone to live in the south of Italy, partly on this account and partly in pursuit of health. He was still, however, on friendly terms with Mrs. Hemans, and meeting my father, his old friend, immediately upon his release, and being for some days in his company, he sent the story home in a series of letters to her. It was from these letters, which Mrs. Hemans kindly allowed my father to use, as well as from his memory that the narrative was compiled.



The Major Mahon, who to a limited extent shared the perils of the adventure, was known to his companion only through the chances of the road which had thrown them together for a time. With this short preface I proceed to give my father's story.

W. D. W. GRIFFITH.

I.

On the 7th day of December, 1820, Major Mahon of the Galway Militia and I left Velletri early in the morning with the intention of reaching Mola di Gaeta before sunset, a distance of about thirty or forty English miles. We travelled in a small calèche, containing only two persons, which we had hired at Rome to take us to Naples. Our driver was an Italian, but the carriage had the appearance of a private one, an appearance which should always be avoided in Italy, because it holds out to the Banditti a promise of richer booty than a large public conveyance filled with mixed company, natives of the country, etc. We reached Terracina about four o'clock P.M., from thence passing near the foot of steep rocky hills and leaving the sea or Lake of Fondi on the right for about three miles. We arrived at the boundary of the Pope's dominions, which is marked by a gateway called 'Porticello,' flanked by two round towers. Here travellers are halted for several minutes, and you are obliged to mount one of the towers to show your passport. The people employed here are a few soldiers as Guard, and a miserable-looking man by way of Civil Officer, who is attended by some ill-looking fellows covered with rags. The air is so unwholesome that all these people look jaundiced and agued, and in the heat of summer they keep up a large fire of wood with the view of correcting the malaria. From the appearance and conduct of these people I have little doubt that they keep up a regular understanding with the Banditti; the few moments you stop at this gate may easily suffice to give notice of the appearance of game to those who are lying in ambush near the roadside. The travellers' luggage is also examined at this gateway and a certificate of that fact is given to him; this, which he is told must be delivered to the Officer at Fondi, will prevent him from being delayed again for that purpose.

Thence we continued our route towards Fondi, five miles further. This town stands at the extremity of the narrow plains I have described. It contains about three thousand inhabitants, and no language can describe the horrible appearance of these people and

their habitations; hideous old women with grey matted hair hanging over their haggard, sickly countenances, men half naked, meagre, sallow and ill favoured, lounge about, while children with only one small rag tied by a piece of string round their waists lie in the dirty streets. The houses are without windows and are plastered with filth. The women are dressed much in the same costume as their children, a coarse shift with long sleeves and a square piece of cloth (generally red) wrapt round the waist, and tied with pack-thread; this is suspended from the shoulders by the same and reaches halfway down their naked legs. They have no shoes. The men were treading grapes (to squeeze out the juice for wine) in small tubs, and walking afterwards in the streets looked as if they had been wading in blood. This is but a very faint sketch of Fondi. As you pass, the people look at you with a ferocious grin, the children scream and run after the carriage and beg with an air which has in it much more of assassination than supplication, and altogether you cannot help rejoicing when you reach the end of the street and are out of sight and hearing of these hideous objects. They are all, in fact, either robbers or connected with them. The same description will serve alike for Terracina and Itri beyond Fondi, and yet it is here that Madame de Staël draws her first glowing picture of Italy of the south, 'of peasants returning from their labours singing melodious airs, of lovely little girls throwing garlands and wreaths of flowers into your carriage' (*vide* Corinne).

I had always made it a rule never to travel late in Italy, and it would have been well for us had we stuck to this on the present occasion. It was within two hours of sunset when we reached Fondi, and of course too late to arrive at Mola di Gaeta before night, so I told our driver we would stop at Fondi that night; however, he dissuaded us from this, saying that the inn was very bad, and that about six miles further on we should find a very good one lately established and at which most travellers now stopped. As I afterwards discovered no such inn exists, consequently the fellow must have had some sinister design in telling us such a falsehood. But not aware of this I determined to go on, and went to the police to inquire if the roads were safe, and they assured us they were perfectly so. But here again the Brigands have their agents, and at that time the roads were very unsafe; more so than usual, in consequence of the Revolution which was then raging at Naples. We then demanded our passports, but they were not ready; and under one pretext or another an hour or more elapsed before we

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could obtain them, and it was very near sunset when we left the town.

The road from Fondi continued as before close to the hills for about two miles and then inclined to the left, striking through a chain of rocky barren hills which rise abruptly on each side of the road. This pass continues for three or four miles. It is among these hills that the Banditti are concealed and thence they can throw themselves on the road from behind a mass of rocks or thickets close by, and afterwards escape by paths unknown save to themselves, and still more difficult for others to trace, as they always attack travellers on the edge of night. I had a strong presentiment (perhaps even stronger than circumstances gave occasion for) that we should be robbed. We had passed about two miles through this dreadful, wild, and desolate tract of country and it was getting dark when I expressed my apprehensions to Major Mahon. He replied, half in joke, 'Don't talk about it, to anticipate evil is to bring it upon ourselves.' He had scarcely said the words when a low hoarse voice called to the driver, and the carriage stopped.

I looked out and said to Major Mahon, 'Here they are!' and three men in dark dresses appeared standing across the road before the horses' heads, with long muskets presented towards us. One remained at the horses' heads, while the other two came up to the door of the carriage, and presenting their muskets within a few inches of our breasts, said something in a foreign tongue, of which I could not distinguish the words, but perfectly well understood the meaning. They made noises and motions to command our silence and that we should descend from the carriage. We complied; they searched inside and took our cloaks and my portmanteau, but overlooked Major Mahon's trunk, which was slung under the carriage. They seemed in great fear of being detected by the soldiers, who had a post of twenty men within a quarter of a mile; and altogether they appeared timid and irresolute in what they were about, as if they feared our resistance, but as we had no arms our resisting was out of the question. Before starting we had consulted our Ambassador at Rome and he had strongly advised us not to go to Naples, as the country was in a state of revolution and the roads were filled with Banditti; but on our telling him that we were resolved to go he said, 'Then on no account take arms with you, as if you are taken by the Banditti with arms in your hands you are sure to be murdered.' We had between us about fifty Napoleons in gold besides a circular note of mine and our letters of credit. We con-

cluded that the former, together with our watches, purses and other such things would be transferred to these gentlemen and that we should be allowed to continue our journey, but the event proved that we reckoned without our host. Quitting the road as expeditiously as possible and taking us with them, the robbers struck into some brushwood close by, where they hastily examined our pockets, took my watch, pocket-book and money, and then pushing us on as before in the midst of them, they began to ascend the hills.

Our path lay along the dry beds of torrents, near masses of loose rocks, and sometimes along the edge of yawning precipices. It rained hard and the night was pitch dark. The Banditti seemed desirous of getting on as fast as possible, and once or twice showed great impatience at the slowness of the pace. One of them ran his dagger into Major Mahon's cloak to make him push on faster, but without in the least wounding him. At other times they frequently gave us their hands to pass the difficult places, and one lent me his cloak and was otherwise very civil; he had good manners. We continued to ascend to the eastward for some distance and then crossed a level plain and again ascended by a very steep and difficult path to the summit of a hill. During the ascent Major Mahon fell and hurt himself severely. We now saw at some distance a fire placed near a thicket; as we approached this a man appeared so suddenly that it almost seemed as if he had risen out of the earth. But I soon saw that he had come from behind a kind of screen which was placed to the windward of the fire. We could perceive that he was dressed like the others (as one of the Banditti) but we could not distinguish his face. The three robbers, commanding us to remain at a distance, went up to this man and conversed with him for some minutes in a low voice. They then again led us, always keeping at some distance from the fire, about four hundred yards further to the summit of a hill. Here we found another large fire of wood around which the Banditti seated themselves and ordered us to do the same.

In a short time, dropping in one after the other, eight more men joined us, making in all eleven. The man whom I afterwards found out to be the captain (Antonio Mattei by name) and two others were dressed in round jackets of dark green velveteen with breeches and waistcoats of the same material, and white stockings, or more correctly pieces of white cloth wrapt round their legs. They had sandals tied with cords, pointed hats ornamented with ribands and tassels, and they wore large earrings. I believe this is the usual

dress of Banditti. The remainder were dressed after the manner of peasants, some of them presenting a most ferocious appearance, and all were armed with muskets, and each carried a dagger about two feet long. One of the gang now made a more careful inspection of our pockets and persons. A sentinel was placed further out, on the point of a rock, while they themselves prepared supper. The half of a pig was first boiled and cut into pieces, and then placed on the embers of the fire to broil. Some coarse bread and some very tolerable wine were next produced, all of which the robbers devoured with the most ferocious appetite. As for us we had no great stomach for the feast, and the Captain, seeing that I did not eat, said he was afraid his bread was not so good as I had been used to. He then offered me a small piece of a very white loaf which I put into my pocket. In point of fact I neither ate nor drank anything until absolutely compelled by hunger to do so, as I had very ridiculously taken it into my head that they intended to poison me. A little reflection, however, convinced me that they had no necessity to resort to such underhand means of getting rid of me, when their stilettos were so convenient and there was no one to prevent them. So I afterwards joined them in their meals, and in two or three days ate as heartily as the best of them.

Supper being over the gang held a council of war concerning us. They said they should insist upon a large ransom, about twenty thousand scudi (about £4,000), but we assured them such a sum was not in our power, and that we had nothing but the bill for £100 which they had taken from me (one of Herries & Co's. circular notes), cash for which we promised to procure and give them if they would release one of us for that purpose and detain the other as a hostage. Major Mahon and myself had each of us originally a letter of credit, but we had torn these up as we went along, so we had no command over any more money than my bill for £100. After some time we again continued our march, which was kept up till eight o'clock next morning without stopping, except once or twice to shelter for a few minutes from the rain. As before stated we had in the first part of our march gone in an easterly direction, but now we inclined southward, always by unbeaten and difficult paths. Sometimes I heard the sound of bells or of horses travelling along the road, sometimes a village clock at no great distance. I well remember passing through a small village while the clock was striking the dread hour of midnight, but I dared not call out for assistance. Indeed I believe all the villages in the neighbourhood are either

inhabited by their friends or by those over whom they have absolute control, and this is entirely in consequence of the pusillanimity of the government of Naples. About eight in the morning we again halted by the side of a hill, and the gang, lighting a fire, prepared a repast much in the same manner as before. Here we found a pig attended by a countryman, the animal was very soon slaughtered and devoured, the liver, etc., being eaten up almost raw, before the poor animal was quite dead; then slices were cut from the thin part of the belly, broiled and eaten immediately. The rest of the pig was afterwards cut up, of which the captain took both loins, and the rest was put into a large iron pot to stew.

It was now our troubles began. We persisted in saying that we could not procure any money beyond the £100 bill, the robbers insisted that we had means, and should get more, at least twenty thousand scudi. Major Mahon was lying on the ground, I was standing by the fire, when two of the most ruffian-like of the gang drew their daggers; one stood over Mahon, the other seized me by the throat and throwing me on my knees, held his dagger to my throat threatening me with instant death if I refused to acknowledge having more money. He continued his threats for some time and I every instant expected the execution of them, till at last the Captain came up, pushed the two ruffians away and ordered them to desist. The Captain then told us he would release Mahon or myself, as we chose; the one released should go to Naples and there raise twenty thousand scudi, that they must have this sum, and that, if we did not consent that one of us should go to Naples or Rome to procure it, we should be murdered there and then. On this it was decided that if the one released could not procure so large a sum at Naples he must go to Rome for more, and in the meantime the other one should remain with the gang, and if the money was not brought by a certain day by his companion he should be put to death without mercy.

We had nothing to do but to say that we would comply, as far as was in our power, and I consented to remain as hostage. The chief reason which induced me to do so was that Major Mahon had been unwell and had likewise several times provoked the robbers by falling down and detaining them, which they thought he did on purpose to enable the police or military to overtake them, and I was fearful he would be murdered if he remained. The Banditti had hitherto prevented us from having any private conversation and obliged us to speak before them, always in Italian; but just before



Mahon left they suffered us for the first time to converse together, and told us to embrace each other, adding that unless Major Mahon procured the twenty thousand scudi by that day week we must never expect to meet again in this world. I took this opportunity of telling Mahon that there was not much dependence to be placed upon them, that they would kill me the moment he was gone and get the money from him as well ; so to prevent this I picked up a small pebble and shewed it to Mahon, and begged he would not send the money unless he received this pebble by the messenger, who was to go for the money and was to meet Mahon, to receive it at Fondi at the house of the Syndic or Mayor of the town and bring a letter from me. The small pebble above mentioned is the token alluded to in Major Mahon's letters and which, as it subsequently turned out, I was unable to send. A peasant was now produced to act as guide and in his charge Mahon left for Fondi. As soon as he arrived there he sent me the following note :

## FONDI.

OH MY POOR DEAR FRIEND,—What I can do I will, if possible I will save you. I see that they are playing us a cruel game and if I had all they demand it would be the same thing after paying it. The only thing to be done now is for you to gain time and I will set off express to our ambassador whom I will urge with all my means to apply to the Government, as I find that it was through the Government that the Genoese Signieur was liberated. I would willingly give all I have to save you, adieu, adieu.

Say that I am gone express to try to get the money if possible—do anything you consider prudent to gain time.

With this cold comfort and left alone amongst these ruffians it may be well imagined that my safety and even my life was in no small danger. I was conscious indeed that it would be against their interest to destroy me, but I was afraid that their natural ferocity might excite them to stab me in a moment of passion, and I looked forward with great anxiety to the return of Major Mahon, whose journey, etc., might occupy five or six days. By degrees, however, I became more reconciled to my situation. I was able to eat their coarse-looking food after the first day or two, and made the long marches without much fatigue. The Captain behaved with extreme kindness to me, he would cover me at night with one or two cloaks (our own by the way) and I always slept in the best place near him. He was rather young, slenderly made and good



looking. He told me that for having committed some crime he was obliged to fly from justice, and continue a life of which he was very tired and which he would willingly leave. He was a shoemaker by trade and the only one of the gang that could read and write. He subsequently told me he had drawn his knife against a Magistrate who, as he said, had unjustly punished one of his relations. The gang in general, with the exception of the two ruffians before mentioned, had nothing uncommon in their appearance. One said he had been pardoned by the Pope some short time before and had remained at Terracina until all his money was spent and then took to the hills again. Another wore a medal having an inscription on it 'Courier des affaires étrangères'; this he told me belonged to a French courier whom he had murdered four months before. He also wore several coins suspended from his breast by different coloured ribands, like so many 'orders.' Our day generally passed as follows: before dinner the gang started from their night quarters, and after marching three or four hours reached the place appointed for the day, and then, first sentries were placed in some trees near, and then they made a large fire, which they did by placing two trees in an angle crosswise, and quantities of dried wood about them. The place opposite the opening to windward was always reserved for the Captain. Then a pig was slaughtered. A fellow laid hold of the animal by the ear with one hand, and stuck his dagger into his throat with the other, ripped up his belly, and tearing out the heart, liver, etc., these were instantly thrown on the fire and devoured half raw. All this was the work of a few minutes. The carcass was thrown into a cauldron to scrape the hair off it, then it was half boiled in the same cauldron, cut into pieces, spitted on a stick with the ends resting on two stones, and the hot cinders, scraped up, soon roasted the meat. The Captain always reserved the loins for himself, which he cut into chops and cooked on a stick as described above; some, however, was merely boiled for the gang, and when done was placed on a bush of butcher's broom (a shrub something like a dwarf holly) which acted as a strainer and each picked his bit. I always dined at the captain's mess, and he invariably gave me the first chop that was done; some very tolerable wine, good bread, oranges, figs, and a liqueur called Rosolio made up the feast, and not a bad one either with a good appetite for the same. Half the animal generally served for the meal and the other half was carried raw ready for the meal at night; when seated around the fire their whole conversation was of the robberies and murders they

had committed. They seemed to dwell on the murders with pride and pleasure, as proofs of their gallant spirit.

A little after sunset the march was again resumed for four hours more, before we reached our quarters for the night, where uniformly we found the mysterious man near the fire whom I have described on the first night, but as I was always carefully prevented from seeing his countenance I could not tell whether it was always the same man or not. They all told me that Mazzeroni was their chief, and some said this man was he, but in this they did not all agree. Sentries were regularly placed, the supper was cooked, and I soon learned to eat and sleep as well as any of them. By continually changing quarters in this way the gang made it impossible for anyone to know where to find them. Our way always lay among rocks by untrodden and obscure paths, and if by chance a village crossed the route, they passed it at dusk, encircling it at some distance. Sometimes we visited the cabins of the peasants in the day time; they were perhaps preparing their dinners, they were ordered to place all their provisions on the table, and the brigands sat down and made the family, all hands, wait upon them, and if any want of alertness was displayed a dagger was at the throat of the offender in an instant, but they contented themselves with threats which were, indeed, seldom required. In this manner we made a circuit of the hills during the fifteen days I was a prisoner amongst them in the Valley of Rocca Secca between Fondi and Frosinone. The gang kept together except on the third day when four or five came up at night, after having been absent some hours. I suspected that they had been out on the roads, and afterwards I learned that such was the case. They had been engaged in stopping a carriage near Terracina and upon this occasion the party had two soldiers with them as guards, one of whom was killed and the other severely wounded, and two Englishmen were wounded but none carried into the mountains. The Captain told me that I was very unlucky in having fallen in with him, for that he and two others had gone down merely to murder a peasant who had offended them, and, said he, 'his dead body lay on the road a short distance from Fondi and your carriage had perhaps passed within an inch of it.' (I afterwards on my return to Fondi ascertained that this was quite true, as a body had been found near the spot on the following morning.) 'You were very fortunate though,' added he, 'in not having a lady with you, because being only one, she would have fallen to my lot, and must have been my wife during your stay with us.'

The murder of this peasant was, it seems, in pursuance of a system which the robbers follow to procure provisions. They employ single peasants at different and distant points to purchase for them in the towns such things as they are in absolute want of, such as bread, wine, tobacco, clothing; and these men are threatened with instant death if they refuse to do what is required of them, or shew the least inclination to betray the gang. 'We never fail,' said the Captain, 'to put our threats into execution because if we were not obeyed we might starve, and we employ men at different places to avoid discovery as well as to prevent combinations amongst themselves. Meat of all kinds we find in the hills and pay the shepherd for it if we have money; if not we take what we want by force or we find wild boars in the woods.' Wherever the Banditti stop to sleep or pass the days, they have always a peasant to wait upon them and go their errands. I remember very well one morning, just after we had started from the place where we had stopped the night, one of the gang came up to me and addressed me in the following terms, 'You saw the old man who waited upon us last night. We suspect he is a spy and just before we started we sent him down to the well to get water and Pietro Paulo is gone after him to murder him and we are waiting here until he rejoins.' Shortly after Pietro Paulo came in sight and most of the gang went to meet him, and then the same man returned to me and smacking me on the shoulders said, 'He has done for him.' I replied, 'What?' He said, 'He has killed him, that is the way we serve all spies.' This information, as may be supposed, did not place me much more at my ease than before.

On other occasions they would ask me to feel the points of their stilettos and say whether I thought them sharp or not. We used generally to cut bread with a stiletto (a very awkward instrument for that purpose, the handle being so short and the blade so long) and upon one occasion when I was using it for that purpose, I could scarcely make it cut, when one of the Banditti observed, 'You will find it sharp enough yet perhaps.'

Major Mahon and I had purchased two very gay dressing-gowns at Venice, which the robbers found among our luggage, and they one day dressed me up in one of them, and one of the gang in the other. Then they made me kneel down, and went through some other ridiculous ceremonies, and told me I was to be murdered in that manner on the following day. It was by these and other means of the same kind that I was kept perpetually alive to the danger

of my situation, and my mind kept always excited. Over their wine the robbers used to boast of a cave which was their headquarters and where they had a store of good wine and tobacco and lived gloriously, ate, drank and smoked, and each had his pretty girl, but they never took their prisoners there for fear of discovery.

About a week after my capture the Captain one day called me aside, and told me he had received a hundred pounds towards my ransom, 'but it is not enough for your board and lodgings,' said he. The gang had determined to murder me, he added, unless ten thousand scudi at least were procured and brought in five days. He insisted on my writing for this sum to Major Mahon who had now returned to Fondi, and had forwarded to me a second letter not much more reassuring than the first, and containing but cold comfort.

*FONDI, Thursday morning.*

MY POOR DEAR UNFORTUNATE FRIEND,—I have just received yours to which I am scarcely able to reply, and have related our sad tale to all our authorities at Naples; the result of their deliberation was to advise me to send at all events the hundred Napoleons and no more even if I could get them. As to the Syndic he denies having any money. What can be done in a strange country without friends? All that I could do for you I have done. Tell the Captain I have found the greatest difficulty in making up even the Napoleons.

The only English person who ever stops here is a Colonel Bisse, whom I could not see as he left this country the very day that I was expected. I shall send the hundred Napoleons at all events, for if (which God of His infinite mercy avert) any misfortune should result, I care not for the money, and have done all in my power to save you, and now let me conjure you to exert all your fortitude as it is your only chance. More money, tell them, is impossible, so if you make promises which you cannot perform, the result of the disappointment may be fatal. Adieu, my poor dear friend, may the great God of His infinite mercy protect you.

T. M.

P.S.—I had expected the token agreed on, but suppose you had lost it. I am not without some hopes that the money may have some effect, but for God's sake before you promise any further reflect that it may be impossible to perform. I have done all I could. May God bless you. Adieu.

There has not yet been any force sent out as I begged it might not be done.

There are in the sack ninety-three Napoleons in gold and

twenty-eight pieces of silver, being three pieces more than 100 Napoleons, which are equal to 442 ducats and 8 carlins.

I did as the Captain requested with a dagger to my throat, and under the impression that his threat would be executed, I begged Mahon to endeavour to procure the money. The Captain added a postscript which I afterwards saw. It was this, 'Si il denaro non arrivi gle darem la morte.' I remained another week leading much the same sort of life, always treated with kindness, except that sometimes the Captain, fancying perhaps that my fears might be dissipated by good treatment, would give me a sour look, and the others would hint I had no reason to be merry. After four or five days more, no news having come from Mahon, the captain told me I must write again, and suggested that as there were a great many English at Rome I might possibly get two thousand scudi there, and I was obliged to write a letter at the point of the dagger to some one there for it.

About this time I could plainly observe that the Banditti had either heard some kind of unwelcome news, or were beginning to despair of ever receiving any more money for my ransom, and that my presence among them was beginning to become burthensome. In fact, I was in their way, and an obstacle to their pursuing their usual occupation, and the Captain one day told me that they had had a discussion as to what was to become of me; some were for putting me out of the way at once. 'But,' said he, 'I opposed that,' that we had lived so long together he could not do so, adding if I had been sentenced to be shot, he must have done it. 'But,' said he, 'you must become one of us, and as we have all committed some crime and become amenable to the law, you must carry out the first robbery and murder.' They then all filled their glasses with Rosolio, and drank the health of their new companion 'Signor Inglese,' and added they intended to go on the road the following evening.

*(To be continued.)*

## LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is opened first.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 32.

*(The Fourth of the Series.)*

'A cannon-ball took off his legs,  
So he laid down his arms!'

'I will never have a man  
With both legs in the grave.'

1. 'The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind.'
2. 'Sir, we can —— those who bring us information  
and are unwilling to obtrude it.'
3. 'The one, whose smile shone out alone,  
Amidst a world the only one!'
4. 'Widow'd and reclused else, her sweets she enshrines  
As China, when the sun at —— dines.'
5. 'I have not suffered quite in vain. You have not  
taught me quite in vain. There is no —— of  
self in what I feel for you.'
6. 'We do but dally on the beach,  
Writing our little thoughts full large,  
While Ocean with imperious speech  
Derides us —— by the marge.'
7. 'He who is only a —— learns things at second-hand and  
by the halves, and is poor authority.'

8. 'My age just knows enough to understand  
How little all its knowledge !'
9. 'You mustn't sell, delay, deny,  
A freeman's right or liberty,  
It wakes the stubborn ——.'

## RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed above 'Book Notes' on a later page.
4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back.
5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
6. Solvers who write a second letter to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
7. Answers to Acrostic No. 32 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than October 20.

PROEM : Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, iii, 1.  
*King Henry the Eighth*, iii, 2.

## LIGHTS :

## ANSWER TO NO. 31.

1. H	e	W
2. A	rg	O
3. M	abe	L
4. L	ewi	S
5. E	videno	E
6. T	hirt	Y

1. Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*.  
*Horatius*, xxix.
2. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 2,  
ll. 1017-8.
3. Whittier, *The Witch's Daughter*.
4. Kingsley, *The Saint's Tragedy*, i, 2.
5. Hood, *Hero and Leander*.
6. Tennyson, *The Brook*.

Acrostic No. 30 ('Torches Slender') : Answers were received from 272 competitors, of whom 244 solved the acrostic correctly, and 18 failed in one or more lights ; five of the others sent no coupon, and five disregarded Rule 5.

The first correct answer that was opened came from 'Ambarrow,' who wins the monthly prize. Mrs. Harvey, Ambarrow, Sandhurst, Berks., is entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

Our ninth series of Literary Acrostics begins with No. 33, published next month, and will run for four months. One of the four acrostics will be taken entirely from Austin Dobson's poems, and the other three from classical literature in general.



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